Compliments of
Author.

A LETTER

BY THE

REV. S. S. LAWS, LL. D.,

TO THE

SYNOD OF MISSOURI (O. S.)

WHICH MET AT

COLUMBIA, MISSOURI, OCTOBER 8, 1872.

SECOND EDITION.

TESTIMONIALS.

"It is the product of a master hand, and will command respect wherever read by unprejudiced minds. * * * We commend it to the earnest study of all into whose hands it may fall."—*Memphis Presbyterian.*

"The letter of Dr. Laws is able, the discussion well sustained, the positions fortified by voluminous reference, and it will well repay a perusal by any one who feels an interest in the subject."—*Earnest Worker.*

"It is an elaborate and careful exhibit of the causes which led to the isolated posture of the Synod of Missouri, and a masterly vindication of the action of the Synod in the controversy forced upon it."—*N. C. Presbyterian.*

"The spirit and manner of the *Letter* are those of a high-toned Christian gentleman, such as Dr. Laws is known to be.

"All interested in the controversy, and especially all Presbyterians, will do well to give this *Letter* a careful reading."—*St. Louis Christian Advocate.*

"We just as positively DENY, as (*The Interior*) asserts, that Dr. Laws 'fights the old D. and T. battle over again,' and that his 'object is to refresh the animosities of the past and render a reconciliation with the General Assembly impossible.' On the contrary, Dr. Laws is carefully courteous, and *clearly points out* THE ONLY WAY BY WHICH RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THIS SYNOD AND THE NORTHERN ASSEMBLY CAN BE EFFECTED. This he does by showing how and by whom the variance is perpetuated.'—*O. S. Presbyterian, St. Louis, Mo.*

"It was the endeavor of my *Letter* to point out the principles that divide us, and thus lead to such an understanding of our differences as would in the end be serviceable, in the most effectual manner, in bringing about such a state of things that a union, as the overture of the Assembly expresses it, "on conditions mutually acceptable," should be practicable. If my *Letter* has not succeeded in bringing these principles to view, then it is a failure. * * The fact is, my position in that *Letter* is favorable to the *union on principle* of all the parts of our Presbyterian family into one glorious Church."—*Letter.*

"Your letter with a logic unanswerable has asserted and vindicated these principles, so that not a word is needed from any quarter for their support. * *

"It gives me great pleasure, to say that I most cordially and fully approve your views and positions, as to the true law of the civil cases you refer to as having been decided in Missouri and Kentucky and Pennsylvania, and by the Supreme Court of the United States. * * These cases however you have handled so well, so justly and ably, that I am more than content with what you have said, and will fearlessly invite the criticism of lawyers, feeling sure that your views and positions as to these cases, will have the approval and concurrence of the learned of the profession."—*Judge W. T. Wood.*

4

[FOR THE OLD SCHOOL PRESBYTERIAN.]

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CONTENTS.

PART I.

	PAGE
The independent position of *The Old School Synod of Missouri* explained and vindicated	1—24
The so-called *ipso facto* resolutions (in foot note.)	6
The action of the Synod with reference to said resolutions	8
Synopsis and Origin of the "Declaration and Testimony."	13, 20

PART II.

The position of the Synod and its relations to its Standards and to other Ecclesiastical bodies	24—85
The Criterion of Judgment	25–27, 81–85
The Application of this Criterion to the proposed union with the General Assembly North	28—51
The appointment of a Committee by the General Assembly at Detroit, May, 1872	28
The Synod Free to Act on the proposed Union	29—30
The Constitutional Principle involved	31—33
Review of the decision of the Supreme Court of the U. S.	33—44
The Position of the Old and New School Assemblies on Politics, &c., in the years preceding the Union and at the time of the Union	45—51
The "Concurrent Declaration" respecting "Rules and Precedents."	48–9, 157–8
The Application of the Criterion to the proposed Union with The General Assembly South	52—68
The Triple Union of the Southern Assembly, Reformed Church and Synod of Missouri	69—72
A Scheme of Action embracing a Summary of the Principles involved in the Position of the Synod	73—77
The Actions of the Synod on Ecclesiastical relations	78—81

APPENDIX. 86---166

The Address of Rev. J. A. Todd, D. D., opening the correspondence between The Reformed Church in America and The General Assembly in the United States..... 86
The Response of the Moderator, the Rev. Dr. W. S. Plumer. 89
The report of the Rev. J. H. Bryson as Commissioner..... 90
The Address of Rev. Dr. Van Zandt and his report..... 91
The Response of the Moderator, the Rev. Dr. Welch..... 93
The Address of Rev. Dr. J. R. Wilson..... 95
Response of the President, the Rev. Dr. Joachim Elmendorf. 97
The Address of Rev. Jno. S. Grasty, D. D..... 98
Response of the Moderator, the Rev. Jno. Montgomery, D. D. 102
The Address of Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D..... 103
Response of the Moderator, the Rev. Jno. Montgomery, D. D. 104
The Controversy with *The Philadelphia Presbyterian*.....105-131, 159-163
The attack of *The Presbyterian*, "Missouri and New York." 105
The Answer of *The Old School Presbyterian*..... 108
The Editorial of *The Presbyterian* on the occasion of refusing to publish "*Dr. Laws' Reply.*"..... 110
The *suppressed* "Reply"..... 113
The Testimonials of the Press and of Correspondents..... 123–127
"Dr. Laws' Correction."..... 128
"Dr. Laws' Statement."..... 129
"The Last Word."..... 159
The action of the New York Presbytery..... 132—152
The conclusion embracing a Scheme of action or *Reconstruction* for "The General Assembly of The Presbyterian Church in the U. S. of America."..... 152—159
The Communication of Rev. E. T. Baird, D. D., to the *Central Presbyterian*..... 164

A LETTER.

MR. MODERATOR AND BRETHREN:

As I looked upon your Synod, in its recent place of meeting, my thoughts leaped back over a period of precisely twelve years. The second Wednesday of October, 1860, your Synod met in that very house, and, by the provisions of the Constitution, I preached the opening sermon, having moderated the preceding Synod, which met in the City of St. Louis. I distinctly recall, as will others, that both of those Synods were filled with discussions on subjects much less interesting and important than those which occupied your recent meeting in determining your future. That interval of twelve years—what an eventful period in both Church and State!

You are all aware that I have been for some years a member of the New York Presbytery, whose territory is the city of New York. When I came to Missouri, a few weeks since, I had no expectation of being at this meeting of Synod. But, now that I have been there, I can say I was most happy at meeting so many friends of former days, and such a goodly number of my old students; and I assure you that I sincerely appreciate the opportunity of joining my counsels with yours in once more establishing your Synod in her goings. I was also glad to meet there a member of the committee appointed in May last, by the General Assembly with which my Presbytery is connected, to visit you at this meeting. The object of that visit is "a closer union" of your Synod with that Assembly, "on conditions mutually acceptable." This unexpectedly opens up the whole question again of your status and relations, which can only be wisely determined by a reference to the past as well as to the present. And I need not say that you should act upon a candid, unselfish, and unimpassioned judgment, formed in view of all the facts, present and past.

There are not wanting a good many well-meaning and easy-going people who indolently sing themselves to sleep, repeating as a lullaby the proverb, *Let by-gones be by-gones*, or—

"Let the dead Past bury its dead!"

Psalm of Life.

This is all well and very right, so far as resentful feelings and unchristian tempers are concerned. "But he is a great blockhead who learns nothing from the past." And we should also be admonished by other verses from that Psalm of Life, to—

"Act—act in the living Present!
Heart within and God o'er head.
* * * * * *
Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait."

In addressing you as the Old School Synod of Missouri, I am reminded of a somewhat singular incident of recent occurrence. The papers inform us that the Order to which Père Hyacinthe belonged, recently, at Paris, buried him by name, and in the use of the burial service. The Père, however, insists that he is not dead but a living organism, and, acting on this view of his situation, notwithstanding his name is dropped from the rolls of the living and transferred to the dead list, he has taken to himself a wife, and, monk as he was, entered into this new and most interesting relation. In fact, he seems to feel that he is more alive than he was under the old régime, and that he has more to live for. Now, has Père Hyacinthe any *right* to live in spite of the decree of the Pope and of his own Order having buried him with due form and ceremony? And, under this state of the case, is he a *de jure* as well as a *de facto* institution? Has he any right thus to treat and unite with another institution, whether *de jure* or *de facto*—a divinely constituted and living organism—on the basis of accordance of views, common sympathies, aims and interests? The fact is, we must leave it to the Père and the Old School Catholics associated with him in the Declaration and Testimony against the errors of his Church, and pledged with him to "use their best endeavors to bring back the Church of their

fathers to her ancient purity and integrity," to answer these questions and make this matter clear to the world; and no doubt we shall hear from them favorably in due time, and have occasion to rejoice with them over the stand they have taken in spite of the opposition and persecution to which it has subjected them.

It is a matter of notoriety, that, in general, the Presbyteries of your Synod have not been represented in any General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church since the year 1866. For six years, therefore, your body has occupied an isolated and somewhat anomalous position. In several instances, during this interval, men of the highest character in the Church were appointed by different Presbyteries commissioners to the General Assembly (O. S.) with which your Synod was formerly in organic relation, and when they presented themselves, they were refused seats on the floor of that body. In 1869 our (O. S.) General Assembly met for the last time, and to the regular meeting of that year, in the city of New York, a commissioner from within the bounds of your Synod was sent and was refused a seat; and that commissioner was one of the oldest, most distinguished and highly respected members of the Synod, and was duly accredited from one of your Presbyteries. Thus for three long years did the Synod go to that Assembly, in the name of her divine and adorable Master, saying, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock;" but the door was not opened unto you. You were refused seats on its floor, excluded from its counsels, shut out from communing therein, as in former days, with our blessed Lord; and thus this Synod of office-bearers in the kingdom of Christ, venerable for years, and for its list of honored dead, was treated as an alien and outcast from the commonwealth of Israel.

Let us glance at the cause alleged for this course of action. The paper, known as the Declaration and Testimony, was published September 2d, 1865, and was occasioned by, and designed to be a testimony against, the utterances of the Assemblies from 1861 to 1865. The Louisville Presbytery, at a regular meeting, soon after its publication, passed an almost unanimous vote approving of that Declaration and Testimony.

For that reason, and for no other ostensible reason, the next General Assembly, that of 1866, which met in St. Louis, Missouri, as its first act after organizing, expelled the commissioners of the Louisville Presbytery (Rev. Dr. Stuart Robinson, Rev. Dr. Samuel R. Wilson, Hon. Mark Hardin, and Gov. C. A. Wickliffe,) from their seats in the Assembly. (Concise Record, pp. 3–4.) But there were forty-one ministers and seventy-eight elders in various parts of the Church, mostly in Kentucky and Missouri, who had *individually* subscribed their names to that paper, known as the "Declaration and Testimony." With reference to *them* the Assembly "condemned" the paper they had signed "as a slander against the Church, schismatical in its character and aims," and "summoned" them to appear before the next General Assembly "to answer for what they had done in this matter," and at once suspended them from the exercise of all their official functions in Presbyteries and Synods until their "case" should be decided, and forbade Presbyteries and Synods meanwhile to "enroll" any one of them, at any meeting, "as entitled to a seat," and in the event that any Presbytery or Synod should admit any one of them to a seat, "then that Presbytery (or Synod) shall, *ipso facto*, be dissolved;" and those who should "adhere to the action of the Assembly," were "authorized and directed" to organize themselves into a *new* body, with the same name, "authority and functions *of the original* Presbytery," or Synod.* (C. R., 77-78.)

* I will here append the record in full of the *ipso facto* resolutions, so called from the occurence of that Latin phrase in the fourth resolution, and the "reasons" relied on as the best that could be given in support of them. This record, be it remembered, was made up as the result of two full weeks' debate, mostly on the side of the majority. But, even conceding the entirely erroneous principle of action underlying it, that the Assembly is unrestrained by the Constitution of the Church in the assumption and exercise of discretionary powers, there is still so much bald confusion and incongruity of thought pervading the whole action that it will be as great a puzzle as a wonder to the future historian, who may not be in possession of the extraordinary and personal elements of that high occasion:

"The Moderator. Before announcing the vote, I wish to say that immediately after its announcement I will entertain a motion that a brother be requested to lead us in prayer. The vote stands, affirmative, 156; negative, 37.

On motion of Dr. F. T. Brown, the Rev. A. T. McGill, D. D., was requested to lead the Assembly in prayer for the blessing of God to attend the action just taken, which he did. *a*

Those who only *voted* in the Louisville Presbytery for the Declaration and Testimony paper, but did *not* sign it, are classed with the signers, and dealt with in the same way. I have made no distinct point of this, as all that is said of the signing applies with emphasis to the voting.

At its next meeting, after this action of the Assembly, 1866,

The Rev. A. P. Forman, Dr. Yantis, and others, gave notice of protests against the vote adopting the paper of Dr. Gurley.

Dr. Yantis asked what was his position in the house.

The Moderator stated that by the effect of the resolutions just adopted the signers of the Declaration and Testimony were no longer members of this Assembly.

Dr. Monfort moved that it be the sense of the Assembly that the above papers take effect at the close of the sessions of this Assembly, and that the signers of the 'Declaration and Testimony' continue until then to occupy their seats. *b*

So the paper of Dr. Gurley was adopted, and is as follows:

1. *Resolved*, That this General Assembly does hereby condemn the Declaration and Testimony as a slander against the Church, schismatical in its character and aims, and its adoption by any of our Church courts as an act of rebellion against the authority of the General Assembly.

2. *Resolved*, That the whole subject contemplated in this report, including the report itself, be referred to the next General Assembly.

3. *Resolved*, That the signers of the 'Declaration and Testimony,' and the members of the Presbytery of Louisville who voted to adopt that paper, be summoned, and they are hereby summoned, to appear before the next General Assembly, to answer for what they have done in this matter, and that, until their case is decided, they shall not be permitted to sit as members of any Church court higher than the Session.

4. *Resolved*, That if any Presbytery shall disregard this action of the General Assembly, and at any meeting shall enroll, as entitled to a seat or seats in the body, one or more of the persons designated in the preceding resolution and summoned to appear before the next General Assembly, then that Presbytery shall *ipso facto* be dissolved, and its ministers and elders who adhere to this action of the Assembly are hereby authorized and directed, in such cases, to take charge of the Presbyterial Records, to retain the name, and exercise all the authority and functions of the original Presbytery, until the next meeting of the General Assembly

5. *Resolved*, That Synods, at their next stated meetings, in making up their rolls, shall be guided and governed by this action of the General Assembly.

In support of this paper, Dr. Gurley read the following reasons for adopting it, which were ordered by the Assembly to be here inserted *c*

1. Because it condemns in strong, yet just and appropriate terms, the Declaration and Testimony, pronouncing it 'a slander against the Church, schismatical in its character and aims;' which it manifestly is.

2. Because it declares the adoption of the Declaration and Testimony by any of our Church courts to be an act of rebellion against the authority of the General Assembly; which it manifestly is.

3. Because it summons the signers of this Declaration, and the members of the Presbytery of Louisville who voted for its adoption, to appear and answer for their conduct before the General Assembly, the body against whom they have offended, and the only body which, in the present circumstances of the Church, can properly and without embarrassment consider and adjudicate the case.

4. Because it summons them to appear before the *next* Assembly, thus giving them ample time for reflection, for repentance, and for making up their reply.

5. Because, in the meantime, it forbids their sitting in any Church court

the Synod of Missouri enrolled, "as entitled to seats in the body," several of the ministers and elders that had signed the Declaration and Testimony, and, out of due respect to all concerned, passed the following resolutions as giving its views in doing so:

"1. *Resolved*, That the *signers* of the Declaration and Testimony are not slanderers, schismatics, and rebels against ecclesiastical authority, but have simply exercised a great Protestant right, and discharged a solemn duty.

higher than the Session—an abridgment of privilege which we are bound to make, in fidelity to our erring brethren, and to the peace of the Church.

6. Because it saves us from even the appearance of taking action in this case which is too summary and severe. Though we might lawfully dissolve the Presbytery of Louisville at this time, no such great or perilous exigency has arrived as makes such an extraordinary proceeding necessary, nor is it expedient. It is better for the Assembly, better for the Church, and better for all the interests in any way concerned in this case, that justice should be secured and administered *in the ordinary way and by the ordinary methods.*

7. I urge the adoption of this substitute, because it provides that in case any Presbytery shall disregard this action of the Assembly, and permit the signers of the Declaration and Testimony, or those who voted to approve it, to sit in the body as members, that act of rebellion, according to an authoritative declaration of the Assembly, dissolves the Presbytery, and causes its powers to pass at once into the hands of those who respect the highest court of the Church, and are willing to submit to its authority.

8. Finally, in answer to the objection, that the General Assembly has no right to pass beyond the lower courts, and deal with individuals, I would say, our *Form of Government* expressly gives to the General Assembly the power 'of suppressing schismatical contentions and disputations'; and this clearly implies the power of dealing directly with persons or parties who are engaged in such contentions and disputations."

a The answer to the prayer offered by that eminent and good man may yet be seen, according to the mind of the Lord, and not according to the purpose of the Assembly.

b What condescension! to allow, by a special dispensation, these signers and sinners of the grade of slanderers and schismatics to continue to occupy their seats until the close of the sessions of the Assembly.

c To "the paper of Dr. Gurley," in support of his *ipso facto* resolutions, besides what is presented in the text, this running reply to the reasons, in corresponding numbers, must here suffice:

(1.) "Which it manifestly is" *not.*

(2.) "Which it manifestly is" *not.*

(3.) "Circumstances" cannot, as here pleaded, justify a violation of the express language of the Constitution.

(4.) "Repentance" for having done right—for having conscientiously done a duty—must necessarily be a some what stubborn and perverse psychological process, and of the most questionable propriety under any circumstances.

(5.) A suspension of all their rightful functions in all the Church courts of which ministers are ex-officio members, and the imposition of a sweeping disability on elders, in the nature of a punishment for presumed *guilt*, is certainly drawn with wonderful and most amiable, yet mistaken, *mildness* as

"2. *Resolved*, That the Synod, having no evidence that these brethren are not in good and regular standing in their respective Presbyteries and sessions, cannot, without violating the Constitution of the Church, deny them their seats."

There were members of Presbyteries and Synod ready and willing to "adhere to the action of the Assembly," and to avail themselves of whatever color of law attached to the *enabling act* to organize and to supplant "the original" bodies.

"an abridgment of privilege." It is the *right* of ordained office-bearers in the Church to act in their officia capacity; and the invasion of a right cannot be confounded with the withdrawment of a privilege. This is to put black for white, and darkness for light.

(6.) Most merciful! The dissolution of a Presbytery involves a mere transfer of its members, in good and regular standing, to other presbyteries, and may be a mere matter of policy or expediency, affecting nobody's character, or standing, or rights. The thing done in this case was *radically different.* It was the institution of *process* against the official and personal character and standing of individual ministers and elders to the number of about 120, *as slanderers and schismatics*, and that, too, *not* "in the ordinary way, and by the ordinary methods," but in a way unparalleled, and by methods forbidden in the Constitution of the Church. (Dis. v., 2, &c.)

(7.) Is the General Assembly the final judge of its own constitutional powers? And for the Synod or Presbytery to question the constitutionality of an "action of the Assembly," does it rightfully incur the guilt of "rebellion," and the penalty of dissolution? This is utterly false. Its statement is its refutation. "And we hold it to be expedient, and agreeable to Scripture and the practice of the primitive Christians, that the Church be governed by congregational, presbyterial, and synodical assemblies." (F. G., viii. 1.) These several "assemblies," or courts, exist by express law, and *each*, by the provisions of that law, has substantive and distinctive powers, which may not be violated, nor absorbed, nor ignored, under any circumstances, by another without doing violence to the constitution and peace of the Church. A lower court or assembly is bound to resist the invasion or subversion of its constitutional powers by the irregular and unconstitutional acts of a higher court.

(8.) The *general* power vested in the General Assembly, by express law, "of suppressing schismatical contentions and disputations," *cannot* be pleaded in derogation of the explicit provisions and restrictions of the same organic law as to the *manner* in which that general power shall be exercised. The power here assigned as in other cases is not a naked or discretionary power, but a power hedged in by various metes and bounds—*e. g.*, "*Process against a gospel minister shall always be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member.*" An instrument pretending to the dignity of a constitution which did not define and limit, as well as assign powers, would only receive deserved contempt. "*In rebus modus*"—each thing has its metes and bounds, says the sagacious Horace. But whether he had said so or not, it is eminently true of constitutions.

Henceforth the Assembly recognized only these adherents, and sternly refused to admit commissioners from the Presbyteries of "*the original*" Synod of Missouri.

It appears from this brief summary that the communion of the Synod of Missouri with its General Assembly was broken off, not by any failure on the part of the Synod to maintain the truth in its purity, or to observe all the requirements of the Constitution and standards of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, unless the act of dissolution was constitutional and of binding force. The untoward thing that eventuated in the unhappy strife and alienation, was a *naked resolution* of the Assembly in derogation, as was believed, of the plainest constitutional prerogatives of the Synod, and of its Presbyteries, ministers, and elders. Certainly no action, manifestly involving such grave consequences, ought ever to be taken on doubtful authority. The action of the General Assembly (O. S.), to which submission was demanded of the Presbyteries of this Synod and of the Synod itself, on pain of *aissolution*, was not a judicial decision on appeal, nor a decision on review and control, nor the result of any other known procedure laid down in, or contemplated by the Constitution of the Church. Grant that the procedure of the Assembly was a "process" instituted in the sense of the Book, the Book also says in terms, and this is the law of the case: "*Process against a gospel minister shall always be entered before the Presbytery of which he is a member;*" and "ALWAYS" does *not* mean sometimes or usually, extraordinary cases being excepted; nor does "entered before the Presbytery of which he *is* a member," mean before the General Assembly of which he is *not* a member. The law of the Church is explicit and unequivocal, that a minister can only be reached through his Presbytery, it matters not what the offence, nor when or where committed; and the reason of this is that the immediate church membership of ministers is with the Presbytery; that ministers are not members of the individual churches, nor are they, *ex-officio*, members either of Church sessions or of the General Assembly, but only and solely of Presbytery and Synod. By the organic law of the Presbyterian Church, therefore, their

responsibility is placed primarily where their membership stands, and, therefore, "process" against them "*shall always*" be entered *before the Presbytery*, whether upon its own motion or upon the mandamus of a higher court. If the law be defective, let it be changed in the way provided, but let it not be overridden on the plea of any present necessity. Whilst it exists, and as it exists, it has with us the authority of the Bible itself—it is to us God's word for the case provided; and no Assembly can add to or take from, override or disregard, the Book without incurring "the plagues that are written in this Book." That very action of 1866, fraught with such dire consequences, was, at the time of its passage, deemed of such questionable propriety, so entirely at variance with the Constitution, so unjust and so unwise, that a considerable minority (about forty), many of whom had never signed the "Declaration and Testimony," braved the fiercest obloquy in opposing it, and several decided protests were at once made against it. Never before did a General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church venture to claim for its *naked resolutions*, not for a judicial or other decision on review and control, reference, appeal, or complaint, or any other known process laid down by, or contemplated in, the Constitution of the Church, but claim for its *naked resolutions* the imperative and binding force of law, and undertake to compel submission to such acts on pain of exclusion from the communion and fellowship of the Church. Aptly, indeed, it is said in one of the protests admitted to record: "This assumption of power, it seems to us, is a manifest usurpation, and, if it be admitted, will completely revolutionize our Presbyterial system, overthrow our ecclesiastical liberty, and resolve the Assembly into a spiritual despotism." (Concise Record, p. 81.) If the General Assembly wishes its actions to have the force of law, the Book provides the easy and the only way in which that can be done, viz.: "It shall be necessary to transmit them to all the Presbyteries, and to receive the returns of at least a majority of them, in writing, approving thereof." (F. G., xii, 6.) In no other way could the General Assembly have acquired the jurisdiction it attempted to exercise, and have removed

the constitutional disability to take such a step as it did. In that memorable case it crowned a series of unparalleled deliverances, extending through six weary years, from 1861 to 1866 inclusive. One of the main reasons for having a Constitution is that it may exert a restraining and conservative influence, and especially protect the rights and interests and character of minorities in such times of trial as those through which we have just passed. It is built for the storm as well as for fair weather.

The simple fact is, and it is important to pronounce it with emphasis, that the act of individually signing the Declaration and Testimony, magnified into such portentous proportions by the General Assembly in 1866, and in the most formal and stately manner denounced as rebellious, schismatical, and slanderous, *never was so much as a disciplinary offense of any grade whatever.* That act was the act of subscribing and publishing, by individual office bearers in the Presbyterian Church, a certain paper known as the Declaration and Testimony. That Declaration and Testimony was *in the nature of a protest,* and nothing more—*a protest* which, in any event, they had an indefeasible right to make, and which, in the given case, they solemnly affirm they do make from a profound sense of duty. No human ingenuity can make anything else out of it. Even Dr. Thomas E. Thomas, the leading spirit in that intolerant Assembly, whilst arguing in support of the exclusion of the commissioners of the Louisville Presbytery, on the ground that they represented *an organized body* that had by a recorded vote approved, and so virtually subscribed, the Declaration and Testimony, conceded that individuals had the right to do so; and ridiculed the mock martyrdom of individuals being willing to suffer for having done the same thing that the Presbytery had done. He did not then think of the happy turn, so prolific of indirection, which things afterward took in the *ipso facto* resolutions, aimed directly at individuals for this very act. "What matters it that individuals," says Dr. T., "here or there may have expressed, in writing or in speeches, public or private, their particular views on this subject? Why, sir, that is one thing. I have

stood, myself, for twenty years, on grounds which I supposed entirely antagonistic to the position of this General Assembly."

The errors in the utterances of the Assemblies (O. S.) from 1861 to 1865, inclusive, against which that "Testimony" is borne, are enumerated under some fourteen distinct heads.

The errors thus enumerated in the Declaration and Testimony (C. R., 121–125,) may be summarized into those respecting: 1. The relations of the Church to the State, and "civil affairs." 2. Slavery. 3. The rule of action. 4. The spirit of intolerance. It is alleged—

1. As to the first of these heads, that the Presbyterian Church was, in violation of her own Constitution, and the fundamental principles of her organization as a spiritual kingdom, put in the false position of "intermeddling" with secular affairs (i); also, by passively assuming the secular obligation of loyalty to a human government and State (ii); also, by criminally acquiescing in the spiritual affairs of the Church being intermeddled with by military and State officials (viii, ix); also, by basing ecclesiastical actions on secular and worldly considerations (vi); also, by allowing the perversion of the office of the ministry and of the pulpit into agencies to subserve political and partizan purposes, against which McPheeters and others resisted in the vain hope that the Assembly would sustain the resistance (xi); also (xiii), by authorizing agents of the Assembly, such as the Secretary of the Board of Domestic Missions, to sit in judgment upon the real or supposed *political* status and sentiments of good and godly ministers, as furnishing the criterion by which to grant or withhold their support, in the service of the Church, from the funds contributed to the treasury of the Lord.

"DEAR SIR—The General Assembly have enjoined the Board to commission no one except of loyal submission to the Government, and to the deliverances of the Church on the subject of slavery.—We are informed your record is not fair, and we decline sending you a commission.

"Yours, truly,

"THOS. L. JANEWAY,

"*Cor. Secretary, &c.*"

Again:

"Mr. ——— will hardly come up to the requisitions of the last General Assembly. His is *quasi* loyalty, and he is hardly in accord with the Presbyterian Church in its declaims on freedom. It may be hard for him, but he reaps as he has sowed. Such men have well-nigh ruined the Church; and it is hardly expected that loyal men will contribute to support one in affiliation with rebellion.

"Yours, truly,

T. L. JANEWAY."

(C. R., 69-70.)

Against neither of these men, and I believe they were both members of the Missouri Synod, did even the Argus-eyed military find any real cause of complaint, yet the less-tolerant Secretary, in obedience to the political behests of his and your Assembly, forced one of those devoted men out of the ministry, for a time, and into secular employment to support his family. The American Church is in its infancy "If they do these things in a green tree, what shall be done in the dry?" (Luke xxiii. 31.)

Besides all these explicit and specific departures from the spiritual and non-secular character of the church, viewed in its relations to the State, and as the independent kingdom of Christ which is not of this world, the Assembly (O. S.) by its course of action, in various ways, necessarily implied and assumed, as to the church and the State, that each might, at discretion, exercise jurisdiction over the affairs of the other. (xiv.)

2. As to the second class of errors, which had respect to slavery, that subject was, when the war broke out, in the attitude of a case settled on avowed principles by various enactments—a *res adjudicata.* But it was re-opened in the heat of the political conflict, and the whole enginery of the church was reversed in its action upon it; motives of action were attributed to the Southern Church which it explicitly disclaimed and reprobated; violence was done the Assembly's record of the past by the position assigned to the slaves themselves as to the privileges of the gospel; and the theory of radical abolitionists, hitherto esteemed unscriptural and infi-

del, was made a term or test of both ministerial and lay communion. (iv, v, xii.)

3. It was also objected to as an error and fault, that any special interpretation of the current and doubtful events of Providence should be substituted in the place of the certain teachings of the word of God as a rule of action. (vii.)

4. Finally, the *spirit* in which all this was done is deprecated and protested against as violent, revolutionary, destructive, "unjust and cruel." (ix.) "This spirit of persecution seems to have broken over all bounds in the late meeting of the Assembly (1865). The testimony of one of its most influential members, one, too, who acted in perfect harmony with the great mass of that body, is, that 'He had been in many political conventions, yet he must say he never anywhere had seen such relentless persecution as is manifested by this General Assembly.'"

Each head is introduced with the formula: "We testify against;" and, in conclusion, they sum up in the words: "Against each and all of these errors in doctrine and practice we testify: Because they are contrary to the Word of God, and subversive of its inspiration and supreme authority, as the only infallible rule of faith and practice: Because they are contrary to the doctrine of the Presbyterian Church as taught in her Confession, Catechism and Constitution: Because they tend to obliterate all the lines of separation between the civil and ecclesiastical powers: Because they have brought the ministry and the ordinances of religion, and the authority of the church, into public disrepute: Because they tend to keep up strife and alienation among brethren of a common faith, and thus delay the pacification of the country: And because they are schismatical." "It is, therefore, under a deep conviction of the imperative call made upon us, to bear a clear and unequivocal testimony against this departure of the church from her ancient faith and order, that we have drawn up, and do now publish, to the world this solemn Declaration and Testimony." "We declare our deliberate purpose, trusting in God, who can save by few as well as by many, to use our best endeavors to bring back the church of our fathers to her an-

cient purity and integrity, upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and under the banner of our only King, Priest and Prophet, the Lord Jesus Christ. In this endeavor we pledge ourselves to assist and co-operate with each other." "We have here," it continues, "frankly, openly, and candidly laid before our erring brethren the course we are, by the grace of God, irrevocably determined to pursue. It is our steadfast aim to reform the church, or so testify against its errors and defections until testimony will be no longer heard. And we commit the issue into the hands of Him, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen."

Now, to "testify against" any thing is exactly what is meant by Protesting against it, and the document containing this testimony is properly termed a Protest. Such, in the language of the document itself, was its real spirit and avowed purpose, and such was the uniform representation of its purport before the Assembly by its adherents and also by some of its enemies. Alas! the most unfortunate and lamentable fact regarding this famous document is, *that it is so true;* that the facts were so sadly as represented, and that the publication of the errors was undeniable. In the heat of the hour it was denounced by the Assembly, in its answer to a protest (C. R., p. 16), as containing "a vast brood of fatal heresies," and those who uttered it were, by the necessary implication of the first resolution of the action, pronounced rebels, schismatics and slanderers. As a matter of fact, the hostility was against the principles asserted and vindicated, not merely against the style or phraseology in which they were expressed, or the specific application of those principles. That which was so galling in the assertion of these principles, in any style just then, was that it so glaringly exposed the sudden and violent inconsistency of those who, though they professed to "recognize, affirm and preach" them, had, nevertheless, trampled them under their feet for years as an irresistible majority, and now, intolerant of all opposition, they rashly undertook to crush the minority by destroying their good name and influence.

But, in the face of such grave charges, listen to the calm words of the Rev. Dr. Henry A. Boardman, the most distin-

guished Presbyterian minister in Philadelphia—the city of brotherly love, who was Moderator of the General Assembly, O. S., 1854, and, on the floor of the same Assembly in 1866 uttered these words in opposition to the passage of the *ipso facto* resolutions:

"I would not disparage these issues. These brethren, as it appears to me, have not been fairly and justly dealt with. I had never read that Declaration and Testimony until within the last two or three days, but when I did read it I felt that I had no right to sit here as a judge upon men without reading what they had written, and what had brought them before this court of Christ. The conclusion to which I have come, after a careful reading of this paper is that there are not five men in this Assembly who will not agree to a very large part of what is contained in that pamphlet. I say, sir, I do not believe that there are more than five men in this Assembly who do not believe a very large part of what is there written. The error of these men is what? Do they stand before you as heretics? Is there any charge against them that they have denied the divinity of our Lord and Saviour, or justification by faith, or any other thing that enters into our Calvinistic system? Not a word of it. Is there any charge that they have been unfaithful in their work? They stand before us untarnished, and as perfectly unimpeachable as any other men in this Assembly. What is their offence? *Their offence is that they asserted principles which we all recognize, affirm and preach.* They have set forth views of the distinction between the secular and spiritual powers, between the jurisdiction of the churches and the state. Some of these views are undoubtedly too highly colored, but is that a capital offence? Is it an unpardonable sin? However wrong they may be, I believe they are honest men. If they have carried that principle to an extreme, is it an offence so gross that they shall not be allowed time for reflection and for reconsideration? Must it needs be that the authority of this court is to be brought down upon them with all its unmitigated severity for this offence? It has never been before the General Assembly of our Church to pass upon such vast interests as are here involved, and upon the ecclesiastical status and reputation of ministers of the gospel with this fatal haste? Are you not willing to extend to those men the clemency that you extend to other men?"

And, in a protest against the *ipso facto* resolutions, offered by this same distinguished, impartial and unimpeachable wit-

ness, wherein several joined him, it is said: "No one has charged them with heresy or immorality. The principles affirmed in their pamphlet are substantially the principles incorporated in our Confession of Faith, and held by our whole Church. They believed that several General Assemblies had violated these principles, and especially that the Assembly of 1865 had undertaken to impose certain laws upon the Church in derogation of the plain provisions of our Constitution. In this belief they are sustained by the Synods of New Jersey and Philadelphia, by several Presbyteries, and by numerous ministers and laymen of the Church." (C. R., p 82.) It is, however, an oversight to say that men "summoned" and "suspended" as schismatics and slanderers had not been charged with heresy and immorality; but it is only in the act thus summoning and suspending them that they are so charged. Outside of that act, the statement is strictly true, and that must be what was meant.

Now, as to the *principles* of the Declaration and Testimony Protest, which "Dr. Boardman pointedly declared he did not believe there were five men in the Assembly who would refuse to indorse," having been expressed in language "too highly colored," let the following unanswerable statement in the speech of Rev. Dr. J. H. Brookes be considered:

"Is the protest contained in the Declaration and Testimony, and adopted by the Presbytery of Louisville, presented in a spirit and form justified by the necessities of the case? Mr. Moderator, in answer to this inquiry it might be sufficient to state that we all listened attentively to the lengthy report of the committee on this villified document. That committee had it long under consideration, and doubtless scanned it carefully and anxiously, to discover every objectionable expression which it might contain. And what did they find? Nothing; nothing, sir, after their laborious research, that can fairly be construed into disrespect to this venerable Assembly. Even the score of extracts which have been read in your presence, and which I can easily show to be cruelly garbled, did not present a phrase or word which struck me as discourteous. It may be owing to my ignorance of the "fatal imposture and force of words," or my want of a refined and cultivated taste, but I confess I cannot see any reason for all this uproar abou

the violent language employed in the paper now before this House. Gentlemen may rave and rage as they denounce its fierce and vituperative style, and invoke 'the hot thunderbolts of hell to strike us dumb and to strike us dead,' but they will come much nearer to something that is tangible when they are kind enough to point out the expressions that are so disrespectful as to justify our expulsion from the Church."

He continues:

"It is a remarkable fact that in a debate extending through two weeks, not even one speaker from the majority has touched the merits of the question before the House, either by attempting to expose the unsoundness of the principles contained in the Declaration and Testimony, or the impropriety of the language in which these principles are embodied. We have had denunciation without measure, but not a word of argument or proof. I submit, sir, that the accusers have utterly failed to make out their case, even on the ground of disrespectful terms employed in the paper for which they have been arraigned at your bar." (C. R., 70.)

He then reviews numerous other Protests, mostly by Church Courts, and shows that the Declaration and Testimony uses "language far less offensive to good taste, and far less disrespectful to the General Assembly, than that which others have been permitted to employ with impunity."

And here are confirmatory words, never answered, from Rev. Dr. Van Dyke:

No, sir, my objection to this whole proceeding is, that it is partial. Why, a stranger coming in here might suppose that these brethren are sinners above all men, when it is perfectly notorious that men high in position in the Church, have, from the beginning, protested against the proceedings of the General Assembly in language quite as strong as any of these gentlemen ever used. Sixty-one members of the General Assembly —sixty-one, I think the number is correct—with Dr. Hodge at their head, said the deliverance of the General Assembly was "unconstitutional, a usurpation of Christ's prerogative, cruel and unjust." Is there anything stronger than that in the Declaration and Testimony? It is perfectly notorious that in the Synods of Baltimore and New York—especially in the cities—the orders of the General Assembly have not been attempted to be carried out. I do not know a man in the region of the church from which I come that will consent

to carry out these orders; and further, it is well known in the Presbytery to which I belong—and who, with the full knowledge of that fact, sent me here—that I have not only refused to carry out this order, but have openly said I would not, on the high ground that I owe an allegiance to Jesus Christ, and upon the further ground that, according to the Constitution of the Church, this General Assembly has no authority to make such an order." (C. R., 7.)

In these extracts the matter and the language of the protest find vindication against the extravagant misconceptions and misrepresentations of both. And, in this connection, it should be borne in mind that the Declaration and Testimony Protest was *not* written for record on the Minute Book of the General Assembly, and it was never offered or asked that it should be placed there, nor did it ever pretend to be a *technical* protest, made under the limitation of the Book, that "none can join in a protest against a decision of any judicatory, excepting those who had a right to vote in said decision"—*i. e.*, it never was and never claimed to be *a protest of record*, as making up part of the record of a decision or transaction of a Church Court; but it was, as it professed to be, a protest in the general and historic sense of being a Declaration and Testimony against certain errors of the Assembly, addressed to the people of God, and commended to the consideration and approbation of Ministers, Elders, Sessions, Presbyteries and Synods. And yet we have seen that technical Protests have gone to record under the rule that they must be "couched in decent and respectful language," and that "it is perfectly notorious that men high in position in the Church have, from the beginning, protested against the proceedings of the General Assembly, *in language quite as strong as any of these gentlemen have used.*"

The origin and signing of that famous and valuable paper, known as the Declaration and Testimony, were of themselves an assurance that it was couched in only such language as befitted a gentleman in vindication of truth and righteousness. The origin was on this wise: The General Assembly of 1865, which met in Pittsburg, Pa., in the month of May, after the surrender of Gen. Lee, required of Presbyteries and Sessions,

as a measure of ecclesiastical reconstruction, that all applicants for membership from the rebellious States should formally renounce, as sins against God, and profess repentance of, as a condition or term of admission to membership, certain opinions and conduct touching political questions and issues, and lying in the domain of "civil affairs," which were erected into terms of ministerial and lay communion, and that, too, not as universally applicable, but only as applicable to the Southern States, when it was well known that men of the same political views were in the Church North as well as South. The radical and unconstitutional character of this action was aggravated by various circumstances, but especially by the fact that it crowned a series of like deliverances from 1861 onward.

At this crisis, when a burden was laid on the consciences of men by Church Courts, such as Christ never authorized, and the constitution of the Presbyterian Church forbade, four men met in the study of a Presbyterian pastor of Brooklyn, N. Y., and prayed and consulted as to what was best to be done. These four men were Rev. J. H. Brookes, D. D., and Edward Bredell, Elder, of St. Louis; Rev. S. R. Wilson, D. D., of Louisville, and Rev. H. J. VanDyke, D. D., of Brooklyn. Dr. VanDyke noted down the points of the consultation, and it fell to the lot of another to put the matter in shape.

It is now well known that that other person—*i. e.*, the writer of the paper known as the Declaration and Testimony—was the Rev. Dr. Samuel R. Wilson, one of the pastors of Louisville—a distinguished Christian *gentleman* and scholar, and the peer, not only in the love of truth and of true Presbyterianism, but in the graces of æsthetic taste and the proprieties of rhetoric and logic, of any who have assailed that "immortal document,"—and those 119 names that signed that instrument and acquiesced in its language, as expressing the simple truth, in all earnestness, are the peers of any who have poured the vials of their fastidious wrath on this witness. It is an old game to attack your enemy by way of defending yourself, which may sometimes do in war, but never in logic, while dealing with tried veterans. The hint of a wary barrister, "If you have no case, abuse the plaintiff's attorney," may

serve the purpose of getting a verdict or a vote for those who battle for victory, but time will be sure to dissolve the sophism into thin air at the touch of the Ithuriel spear of those who do battle for the truth as delivered to the saints.

How could there have been any "slander" in such a document as we have already seen it to be, except upon the legal paradox, the greater the truth the greater the slander; but, unfortunately even for that plea, the General Assembly has no *private*, but only a public character, and there is no principle of estoppel known to the Presbyterian standards by which the truth itself, on grave ecclesiastical issues, can be excluded from the rear of the Church and refused a public hearing, be it expressed in however earnest and homely Saxon.

> "But error, wounded, writhes in pain,
> And dies amidst its worshipers."

Schism is the rending of the visible Church into parts, but the guilt of it rests, not on those who vindicate the truth in never so homely phrase, but on the adherents and promoters of error in however specious and gilded a form and manner. Rebellion proper, like treason, involves the question of sovereignty; but the Church knows no king but "one Jesus," and no rebellion or treason except against his spiritual sovereignty. "My kingdom is not of this world, else would my servants fight." It is simply grotesque to clothe an erring council with attributes and prerogatives which belong alone to "God our Saviour."

No, the Synod of Missouri has no occasion to hang her head or to cover her face in shame, as having compromised her submission to the standards of the Church, for having resolved that she could not "deny them their seats," who joined in this earnest proclamation of the truth against prevailing error. These men, thus summoned and suspended, never were, upon any defensible theory of their case, guilty of any disciplinary offense whatever; and the Synod would have been false to every principle of honor amongst brethren, treacherous to the ordination "promise to be zealous and faithful in maintaining the truth of the gospel, and the purity and peace of the Church, whatever persecution or opposition may arise unto you on that

account," and faithless to the Head of the Church, had she refused to bear with them their burden and reproach, and to throw around those of them who were her own members the mighty shield of her protection, her prayers and her sympathies, against the cruel and lawless sentence suspended over them. Any other course would have been execrable for its unspeakable meanness. The *injury* inflicted on the good name of these six score office bearers amongst the churches, from a temporary exclusion holding them up to public suspicion, reproach and scorn, as though *probably* guilty of high crime, was *scarcely less* than the injury from a sentence of total and final exclusion from their offices and membership in the church. It was, under the circumstances, a virtual condemnation before trial—the pronouncing and executing of sentence and proceeding after the long, slow interval of a year "to examine and decide."

The record of your Synod in this matter sheds imperishable luster on her name. There is a virtual confession of this in the subsequent course of the General Assembly (O. S.) itself, for although it sternly ignored your Synod's existence, dropped its name from the roll, and numbered you among the dead and dissolved, yet that Assembly never proceeded to the extent of carrying into execution the *ipso facto* decree against any of the six score individual offenders summoned so sternly and relentlessly to its bar; nor even against any church courts in all the length of the land, except in Kentucky and Missouri. Indeed, it seemed almost certain, when this decree was passed, that it would give occasion to the dissolution of the Synods of those two States, as a mild and Christian method (sic?) of church reconstruction in the border States, as the signers were mostly within their bounds. However, the Assembly was "hoist by its own petard" in the apparently unanticipated dissolving act of the Nassau Presbytery, Brooklyn, New York. That Presbytery, *ipso facto*, enrolled and admitted to a seat an elder who had signed the terrific Declaration and Testimony, just the same as had elder Johns. The mighty Synod of New York was involved. The attention of the General Assembly was called, not only by review and control, but also by a dis-

tinct motion, to this state of facts, but no attention was paid to it. The mere *fact* of enrolling the name, according to the decree, of itself operated the *dissolution*, and the Assembly, on learning the fact, was in consistency and *in honor* and *in duty bound*, either to treat the disobedient body as the St. Louis Presbytery and the Missouri Synod and others in Kentucky and Missouri were treated, or to repeal the offensive and unequal action, and repair the damage it had done. And, then, as to the individuals summoned, the next Assembly utterly failed and refused to go into "their case," either to "examine" or to "decide." An appearance was put in and trial demanded, but it was refused. The failure of those summoned to appear in any process, the Book distinctly provides, does not arrest their case, or authorize the Assembly to enter a *nolle prosequi*, but only aggravates by adding contumacy to the alleged offence, and thereby intensifies the penalty to be meted out.

A great wrong was done the Synod of Missouri, and she has only stood, as in duty bound, in self-defense—rather, in defense of the truth and of the right, and of constitutional Presbyterianism. The Presbyterian world is your debtor.

But why pursue this aspect of the case any further, as the spectacle it reveals to us, view it from what point we may, is most painful and humiliating; and a feeling little less then one of sadness is experienced at any attempt to justify or extenuate such "miserable doings" on the part of a great, grave, historic body, such as was the Old School General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America. Its glorious sun went down under a cloud. *Requiescat in pace!*

PART II.

The main thing in mind, at the very outset of this Letter, was to consider, as briefly as the case would allow, the present relations of the Synod of Missouri, and the duties that arise therefrom. Our relations, not only as individuals, but as church organizations, determine our duties. Some relations are permanent, and the duties arising therefrom, are likewise

permanent; some relations and their corresponding duties are contingent, variable, and transient. The relations of husband and wife, of parent and child, originate certain duties; but should the wife, or the child, or both, die, the peculiar duties of husband and parent would cease with the cessation of the corresponding relations. Other relations, as those of the soul to God, are *permanent*, and so also are the duties arising therefrom. This is a fundamental principle in ethics, and has a valuable application to the case in hand. The relations of the Synod of Missouri are primarily to the truth as revealed in God's word, and as expressed in the standards of the Presbyterian Church. These standards rest entirely on the Holy Scriptures. The duties arising out of this relation to the truth of God are fixed by God himself, and cannot be ignored or violated without great criminality. The very essence of Christian liberty consists in our freedom from the interposition or mediation of any human authority, in Church or State, between us and God. We accept our Presbyterian standards, not as of human origin and authority, but as drawn out of the word of God, and as being to us, as a Church, his own word in a practical and systematised form. Hence the intolerableness of any church court or Assembly assuming to exercise powers not recognized by the standards or powers from which it is restrained by them.

Now how stands your case? How stands your Synod in relation to the truth?

"Does the Old School Synod of Missouri stand for anything as against the Northern or Southern Assembly? Does it embody any principle, vital to the Christian commonwealth, that they do not? Is it, as a Presbyterian organization, the *sole* custodian of any truth of high value in the ecclesiastical constitution? If it should unite with the Assembly North, or the Assembly South, would it alienate any trust that could not safely be committed to the Church into which it would be merged? Could it be assured that all the vital ends of its own existence would in that case be realized?

"No church has any right to *be* unless it stands for something. It must embody and conserve some truth, some prin-

ciple, some great matter of Christian interest that no other Church does, or it has no just title to existence. It must be charged with some portion of God's work that no one else is at hand to do, and that no one else can be trusted with, or its presence among the Churches is an intrusion and an impertinence. But if it have in hand some great work that no one else can be trusted with, then its existence is not only justified, but imperative. To alienate its existence is to betray its trust. Its members cannot disorganize it without incurring guilt. God holds them to account for the work he has given them to do, and they cannot destroy the body which is the instrument provided by the Head of the Church for doing it.

"This is the test by which the question of union must be tried."

This extract is taken, with slight variation, from the Southern Review, April, 1872, in a discussion of the question of the reunion of the M. E. Churches, North and South, well worthy of attention by those interested in your situation. It is my information that it was written by one of the Bishops of that Church, resident in Missouri, and greatly respected by you all.

It is believed that the criterion here laid down will commend itself to your best judgments as sound, and of general utility. Its application to the facts of your case is not difficult. What, then, is the precious and peculiar treasure which your Synod is guarding? What is the special trust respecting which it should be careful to give a good account of its stewardship? It may be compressed within a single sentence, viz.: *The subordination and fidelity of the Church Courts, and especially of the General Assembly, to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church.* This embraces all. No change is sought in those standards, but fidelity and submission to them, in their well understood and true sense. It has only been against departures from, and violations of, those standards in the administration of the affairs of the Church, that the Synod of Missouri has testified. There is no need of going into detail, nor is it practicable in this connection. Those standards are simple and explicit in excluding politics from the Church, and in excluding the Church from the sphere of poli-

tics, as well as from that of general science; they prescribe to the Church her appropriate and peculiar spiritual work, and provide for the decent and orderly performance of it. Neither the General Assembly, nor any other assembly, is competent to change the standards by adding to, or taking from, or ignoring their provisions. These standards make up what is meant by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, and that Constitution is to us the medium and the sole medium, as the simple and accepted exposition of God's Word, through which the General Assembly receives power from Christ, and according to which, without any infallibility or inspired discretion, that power is to be exercised. When (F. G., xii.*) it is laid down as a radical principle of Presbyterian Church Government "that *a majority shall govern*," the necessary limitation is, *govern* in subordination to the Book or Constitution, and as it prescribes. Any other view renders the Constitution a mockery and a snare, and resolves the government of the Church, not into the calm judgment of the majority, as to the meaning and requirements of a written and accepted Constitution, but into the arbitrary, irresponsible and capricious utterances of expediency and discretion, to the utter destruction of all order in the Church, as would be the result of a like course in the State. And the language only appropriate to regulated society, would be deceptively applied to what would be virtually the acts of a lawless mob. (See Con. F., ch. I., 1 and 6, and chs. XXIII., XXV., XXX. and XXXI ; Form G., chs. I., II., VIII—XII., XIII., 1, XIV., 1, &c.; The Discip., ch. I., 1, &c.; The Directory.)

To the extent that the followers of Christ agree in doctrine and Church order, and especially to the extent that those who receive the same standards agree as to the sense and application of those standards, so as to be able to dwell together in unity and peace, and to coöperate in the labors of the gospel, exempt from strife and confusion, there is great strength, comfort and encouragement in union, and also in wealth and numbers. But any organic ecclesiastical union, in the present state of *Ecclesiology*, except as it is based on harmonious views of the doctrines of grace, and of the nature, power and duties

of the Church and Church courts, it is humbly submitted, tends to forfeit the consummation so devoutly desired of the ultimate unification of Christians as one visible Church, and must be rather a source of weakness and warring than of power and peace. The laboratory illustration of procuring and keeping the elements pure and unadulterated, in order to an ultimate perfect combination of such as are endued with proper affinities is pertinent here.

Now, as to any contemplated Assembly relation by your Synod, it is not forgotten that the question has just been before your Presbyteries at their spring meetings, and that the report of their action has been made to this Synod · and, also, that it is known that a majority of the Presbyteries decided against the formation of an Assembly connection. Under all ordinary circumstances, surely this ought to settle the matter; and some impatience at any farther consideration of the subject, for the present, seemed very natural. But, really, it seems that the present case was not an ordinary one; for the peace and repose from all agitation which the action of the Presbyteries contemplated were, before your meeting, denied the churches. Indeed, the whole question of Synodical relations was unexpectedly disturbed and unsettled by several circumstances that could not have been readily anticipated. The General Assembly, North, in answer to an overture from the commissioners of one of the Synods of Iowa, "looking toward Christian fellowship, and a more fraternal union with that body known as the Independent Synod of Missouri," "*Resolved*, That we cherish a deep and heartfelt sympathy with all Christians of the Presbyterian name and faith, desiring to be brought upon grounds of closer union with the same, and that we are ever ready cordially to welcome all such to our ecclesiastical fellowship, on conditions mutually acceptable." "A committee of three was appointed to visit the Synod [of Missouri], consisting of Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D., Rev. Robert W. Patterson, D. D., and Hon. H. Humphrey Leavitt." (Min., pp. 70, 71.) It is no fault of any members of your Synod, therefore, that the question is thus opened

again. This circumstance, however, does help to show how precarious was your peace—almost anybody could disturb it.

This committee, of course, can bring to the notice of the Synod nothing new, as the actions of the body they represent are published and known to your body, and this committee is not authorized nor competent to modify nor to construe those acts with any special authority whatever.

Your Synod stands free and untrammeled in choosing her relations. The record shows this. It says. The two General Assemblies of the Presbyterian Church having both been in due form *dissolved* on Friday, Nov. 12, 1859, [Pittsburg, Pa.] a *Joint Convention* was held," and adopted certain resolutions, the preamble of which begins in these words: 'In the Providence of God, the two branches of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, after a separation of more than thirty years, *are again united.*"

In this transaction we behold the union of the two Assemblies accomplished, and the expiring act of the General Assembly (O. S.) with which the Synod of Missouri was formerly connected. On the final *dissolution* of that Assembly your Synod, of course, ceased to be under any obligations and duties arising out any relations thereto. "For the woman which hath a husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead she is loosed from the law of her husband, so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." Since 1866, for three years, your relations to the General Assembly were recognized by you, and your rights therein were claimed, and a willingness was expressed to discharge all constitutional duties consequent; but your claims were denied and ignored. For three years, since November 12, 1869, your Synod has been an Independent and separate body, with no taint of schism upon it. Whilst that Assembly existed, your Synod had covenanted with God to seek its recovery from certain grievous departures from the standards of the Church. Since the final dissolution of that body, your Synod has been able to breathe more freely; it has in fact been, and without dispute, an independent body, and that *sans reproche.* As long as that Assembly existed the Synod

still continued to recognize it as its Assembly, and to testify against its supposed errors; as a matter of right and duty, if God peradventure might recover it, and commissioners were not forbidden to claim their seats on its floor. But even suppose the Synod did recognize the Assembly (O. S.) to the last, although the Assembly persistently, but with growing improvement of temper, refused to recognize the Synod, yet it would not follow that the Synod can now wisely and properly enter into a relation with another body where the errors are no greater, perhaps, in large part, only the same as those in the body from which she declined to avow a total separation, and with which, in fact, she claimed to be in relation, and in which she asserted her *right* of representation to the end. Certain differences and difficulties which may not justify a total separation or schism, may, nevertheless be an insuperable barrier in the way of newly forming a union. The Assembly (O. S.) did not succeed in dissolving the Synod of Missouri, but it did succeed in dissolving itself; and since that dissolution the whole matter of union has become an original question with the Synod of Missouri. The wife may know traits in the character of her husband which would certainly have prevented her from marrying him at the first, had she known them when she was single and free to choose her relations for life, but which would not at all justify her in seeking a divorce—*a separation a vinculo.* After having once formed a relation, things may and ought to be borne in peace and patience, which, prior to the formation of the relation, would have been good and constraining reasons for not entering into the relation at all. The existence, now, in an Assembly, of the errors against which you testified, but from which you did not separate, might be a sufficient reason for declining to join such Assembly in organic relation, and entering upon a new career of protest. Indeed, you are not wanted unless accordant in views. You will observe that the language controlling the appointment of this committee to visit your Synod very properly says: "We are ready, cordially, to welcome all such *to* our ecclesiastical fellowship *on conditions mutually acceptable.*" Do such condition exist? *i. e.*, Are the conditions of the North-

ern Assembly acceptable to *you?* The appointment of this committee contemplates your forming organic relations with the Northern Assembly. And why not? Can any good and sufficient reason be given why this union should not take place? Well, the answer ought to be satisfactory and not difficult.

A criterion was laid down above for determining this matter, and now let us apply it. *If the Synod can discharge her special trust in that connection better than she can independent or in any other relation, the union should be consummated without delay.* We have seen that the Synod of Missouri has "a trust," and that it consists mainly in upholding the *principle*, that the Presbyterian Church is not governed by canons nor by canon law, but by congregational, presbyterial, and synodical assemblies; that these assemblies do not govern by virtue of any inherent power, but that they exist and are constituted by express law; that they are not at liberty to legislate for themselves or the Church, but are subject to that express law at all times and under all circumstances; that that law is the Constitution or organic law of the Church; and that the standards of the Church, viz., The Confession of Faith, The Catechisms, The Form of Government, The Discipline and Directory, which make up that Constitution, are drawn out of the word of God, the Holy Scriptures being the only rule of faith and manners and the revealed will of God, as interpreted in the standards of the Church, the only foundation for the exercise of any authority within or over the Presbyterian Church, or any part thereof. It is not enough that this subjection of the courts of the Church be implied, or simply politic and verbal, or theoretical; it must be open, actual and practical, and for conscience' sake, as an obedience to the Word, even "the Head of the Church." "There is no other head of the Church but the Lord Jesus Christ." 'This Constitution of the Church is in the nature of a charter covenant, under which franchises are enjoyed and property vested for the maintenance of a certain system of doctrine and order, and the claim to exercise powers not assigned, or in a way other than as prescribed, involves a

breach of this covenant, in which all acquiesce in joining the body; it also involves dishonest dealing in temporal things with those who have joint interest under the charter.' Such are, substantially, the general doctrines of the Church, and the general principles of the Constitution for which this Synod and its Presbyteries have testified during the recent struggle with its own General Assembly They are manifestly fundamental in the system of Presbyterianism. (D. P., 90.) They are inherent in its very organization; they are vital and must be omnipresent throughout all its parts, manifesting their life-sustaining and controlling influence in the highest as in the lowest assembly and court, in the highest and most honored as in the lowliest and humblest member, or decay will set in and feebleness result, and even the death of apostacy may be the final doom. Surely I do not misconceive nor misstate the case, nor do I exaggerate the tremendous importance of the *idea*, that the continued existence of the Presbyterian Church, as a distinct Christian organization, depends on the subordination of the courts of the Church to its Constitution. The General Assembly has no more right or power to change that Constitution by its sole action, or to act outside of it, or contrary to it, or other than as it prescribes, than the Congress of the United States has to act in like manner with reference to the Constitution of the United States. In either case such conduct would be in its sphere revolutionary and destructive of the existing order of things. If the Constitution of the Church needs changing, let it be done in a lawful way; but no exigency or necessity, military or otherwise, can be pleaded in justification of any departure from it, or infraction of it, as it exists.

It was by conduct of this revolutionary, insubordinate and destructive character, as it is believed, that the General Assembly (O. S.) broke up the relations of your Synod to it, misled the civil courts to divest it of property, created a discordant element by misguiding some of its own members, erected on the same territory a rival Synod, and, though failing to bring you into subjection to the new order of things, and notwithstanding your prayers and efforts "to reform the

church or testify against its errors, until testimony should be no longer heard" (Oct., 1869), that Assembly, up to the time of its dissolution (Nov. 12, 1869), continued as a body to adhere to its false position. The testimony of your Synod in that direction is now of course closed and no longer of any avail, but yet it was a work of faith and duty, although the duties resting on your Synod respecting that Assembly now no longer exist. The record is made up and is on high.

But what is the duty of the Synod of Missouri towards the new body styled the Northern Assembly, into which our old Assembly was merged, and whose committee visited you? The fact is that this body holds the property wrested from you, embraces the Synod erected to displace you, and has in a most equivocal manner likewise entered on the possession and use, as the legitimate and sole heir, of the doctrine of the "Assembly's omnipotence." The evidence of the last statement will appear conclusive on a brief review of facts, and I ask special attention to it: My point is that the General Assembly (North) has squarely, distinctly, unequivocally and conspicuously placed itself upon the theory that the General Assembly is the judge of the constitutionality of its own acts; that the constitutionality of its acts is not to be called in question. If the *principle*, that the acts of the General Assembly are final when civil rights respecting property, franchises and the like are drawn into question by those acts, so as to preclude all inquiry by the civil court, is once accepted and allowed to emerge into practical operation, there is no power left to stay its assertions of finality over all ecclesiastical affairs. This principle the Assembly, North, accepts and asserts. Let us look at the facts in evidence.

It will be remembered that in the ever-memorable St. Louis meeting of the O. S. General Assembly, 1866, the case of the Walnut Street Church, Louisville, Ky., made its appearance, and was disposed of in such a novel manner as to call forth a protest from some slow members. That action was followed by litigation, both in the State and United States Courts. At the last regular meeting of the O. S. Assembly prior to its dissolution a committee was appointed, of which Dr. Hum-

phreys was chairman, to take charge of this Walnut Street church "case," "and for the necessary expenses of said case in the court from which, and in the court to which it had been appealed, said committee was authorized to draw on the Board of Publication for a sum not exceeding five thousand dollars." (Minutes 1869, p. 943, and Supp., 1186.) The Walnut Street Church case, Watson vs. Jones, 13 Wallace, was decided by the Supreme Court of the United States this spring (1872), and the *rule* laid down, as governing the decision, is: "*That, whenever the questions of discipline, or of faith, or of ecclesiastical rule, custom or law, have been decided by the highest of these church judicatories to which the matter has been carried, the legal tribunals must accept such decisions as final, and as binding on them in their application to the case before them.*" It is noted that Chief Justice Chase did not sit on the argument of this case, and took no part in its decision, and that Justices Clifford and Davis dissented, leaving six out of the nine members of that highest court of the land as concurring in the opinion delivered by Justice Miller.

It will be observed that the decision by the United States Supreme Court of this Kentucky case (Watson vs. Jones) differs somewhat from the two decisions of the Supreme Court of Missouri in which your Synod has been interested. In the first of those cases (Watson vs. Farris) the opinion of the Court was delivered by Judge Wagner. "Vacancies in the Board of Trustees of Lindenwood College were, by the terms of its charter, to be filled by a Presbytery in connection with the General Assembly (O. S.)" In September, 1866, after the formal meeting of the St. Louis Presbytery for the transaction of business, "and after the roll had been called, and the absentees noted by the clerk, Mr. Niccolls protested against the admission of John J. Johns to a seat in the body, on the ground that he was a signer of the Declaration and Testimony." *Held* that a Presbytery so dissolved—*i. e.*, for enrolling a signer of that paper contrary to the *ipso facto* order—had no power to appoint Trustees of Lindenwood College. The simple fact of enrolling Johns operated an abrogation of

the rights and legal functions of the Presbytery, the protest of Niccolls having no other effect than simply to call attention to the fact of enrolling as stated.

The ground on which the Court thus decides is that the General Assembly has unlimited control, "legislative, judicial and executive," over "the concerns of the whole Church," and, whether a case is regularly or irregularly before it, is a subject for it to determine for itself; and no civil court can revise, modify or impair its action in a matter of *merely ecclesiastical concern.* Now, although this Board of Trustees was created and perpetuated in great part to hold and use the property of Lindenwood College, yet the court utterly denied that the *title* to the property was involved or drawn into question, and hence insisted that the matter in issue was wholly and only ecclesiastical; and the Court concedes that *if* the title to the property had been in question, the rule would be different. In the language of the Court: "*In matters of litigation, where the title to property comes in contest, the rule would be different.*" Certainly the decree of the Court, as a matter of fact, immediately divested "The original Presbytery" of St. Louis of all available interest in and control over a property which it had hitherto held by its trustees. It looks very much as though the real question, therefore, was, as the decision resulted in determining, which of two parties before the Court should, according to law, hold the "title to property." The *holding* of the title—not its *validity*—was unquestionably the precise thing "in contest;" and as the holding carries with it all the use and benefit of the property—all that gives the title *value*—it was an *error* of the Court, even upon its own ruling, to throw out the case as *purely ecclesiastical.* A purely ecclesiastical case would be one where no vested civil right is drawn into question, or made dependent thereon: whether a belief of the divinity of Christ shall be a term of communion, or a condition of licensure or ordination to preach, is purely ecclesiastical, as the function conferred or withheld is purely spiritual. But the chartered franchise of appointing trustees to hold the legal title of a propery of valuable uses, has dependent on its exercise the

enjoyment of chartered rights. The trust and confidence were, in the case in question, really reposed in "the original Presbytery" of St. Louis, which body, by its appointees, held the legal title to the College, provided that Presbytery was still in connection, as the charter required, with the General Assembly (O. S.) Was that connection ever legally broken up? Was "the *ipso facto* ordinance" "regular, and the deprivation lawful?" Could an unconstitutional, lawless "edict" of the Assembly dissolve a Presbytery or anything else in the eye of the law, unless, perhaps, the body making it? It would seem that some strange mist covered from view this property as the very thing "in contest;" and, by the statement of the Court, had this point, which was the very heart of the controversy, been recognized, the ruling would have been "different." It might then have been considered, the Court observed, "necessary to look behind the *ipso facto* ordinance to see whether *it* was regular." Nothing so effectually hid this point from view as the pre-occupation of the mind of the Court by an utterly erroneous and *fanciful theory of Presbyterian Church Government*, and of the General Assembly as an executive, legislative and judicial body, acting upon all the affairs of the church "with unlimited control."—It requires no legal prophet to conjecture that some legal process may yet recover Lindenwood to "the original Presbytery," not only as giving Presbytery its rights, but as giving consistency to the court itself.

In the subsequent case, March term, 1871, (not yet in Reports, October, 1872),* Watson *vs.* Garvin, opinion of same (Supreme)

* Since in type I learn that Watson *vs.* Garvin is set down to be reärgued. My quotations of the opinion of Judge Bliss are taken from that opinion as published in the *Old School Presbyterian*. There appear to be only two points in the case: 1. Whether there is any *implied* trust in the church court above the individual congregation—a strictly legal question to be settled by the general *doctrine of implied trusts;* and 2. If such trust can be found, then did the *ipso facto* action destroy "the original Presbytery," and constitutionally supplant it by another Presbytery? Every principle of sound reasoning applicable to the case, and the bearing of the legal position of the Supreme Court of Missouri, properly interpreted, must be against the *ipso facto* action as ever having had any such legal effect. And, then, the St. Charles Church remains in undisturbed relation to "the original Presbytery," to which, as of old, the implied trust, if there be such a trust in the case, must necesssarily still continue to run.

court, by Judge Bliss, The First Presbyterian Church of St. Charles held its property upon no express condition in relation to its ecclesiastical connection; and hence the Assembly party were denied their claim, on the ground that nothing had occurred to draw the title, thus unrestricted, into question. But the court argues, as in the former case, that if property rights had been in question, the Assembly decision would *not* have been accepted as final. In that case the court says: "It might, perhaps, have been necessary to look behind the *ipso facto* ordinance to see whether it was regular, and the deprivation lawful." And summing up an extensive survey of cases, the court, (Bliss, J.), says: "In all the cases we find it firstly (first?) everywhere taken for granted, and must necessarily be so under our system, that upon matters purely ecclesiastical, *not affecting property rights*, the decisions of the proper church judicature are conclusive upon civil tribunals." And again: "Upon ecclesiastical matters each (church) must decide for itself. *But no man, or association of men, can be deprived of property except by the hand of the law.* It is true that trusts pertaining to property held for ecclesiastical uses will be protected like other trusts."

It will be observed, on a comparison of these different decisions, that the Supreme Court of the United States has gone beyond the Supreme Court of Missouri, by laying it down as a *rule*, that where even the rights of property directly depend upon the action of the highest ecclesiastical court of any church, the civil court, in trying those rights, will not go back of that action to inquire whether it is or is not in accordance with the constitution of the body to which the rival claimants belong. With Presbyterians that highest court is the General Assembly, under all ordinary circumstances, and as the Book provides, so that it is here ruled and decided by the highest court of the land, that the civil courts must accept the decisions of the Assembly as final and not to be questioned, even when property depends thereon. In the Missouri cases the Supreme Court laid down the doctrine, as a rule, that in purely ecclesiastical cases, but *not* in others, the decision of the ecclesiastical court is final *quoäd* the civil courts, and mis-

took the Lindenwood case as purely ecclesiastical; whereas, the United States Supreme Court *held* that in *all cases* the ruling of the ecclesiastical court is ultimate.

The General Assembly, we have seen, took part in this Kentucky case, thus decided on appeal, and bore the expense of it. Now, observe, in the Minutes (pp 52–53) of the United Assembly that met at Detroit this spring (1872), we have the final report of the committee appointed in 1869, and learn that a part of the drafts on the treasury, in meeting the expenses of this case, were paid by the United Assembly; that the opinion of the court is published, by order, in full in the Appendix of the Minutes, that a committee is appointed to prepare an abstract of it for publication in the new Digest; and that a still further expression of approbation of, and of satisfaction with, that opinion is given in these words: "The General Assembly will not be slow to appreciate the value of this opinion in the protection which it affords to the liberties of a free church, and to the funds which may be entrusted to the Assembly and to its congregations for pious uses."

Undoubtedly the Assembly has succeeded in enlisting the tremendous influence of this high court in favor of that view of the supremacy of the General Assembly against which your Synod has, in the most explicit terms, for many years protested; but we cannot forget that both the courts and the Assembly have changed positions on this important subject. The decision of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, on the division of the Presbyterian Church of 1837, has been regarded hitherto with great respect. This case (The Commonwealth *vs.* Green, 4 Warton,) was viewed by the General Assembly (O. S.) as of special value. Let Dr. Thomas E. Thomas state how matters stood: "The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania," says he, "decided in our (General Assembly, O. S.,) favor, on the ground that the General Assembly, in these acts (dissolving the Plan of Union, etc.,) had not transcended its constitutional authority. The question with that court, speaking through Chief Justice Gibson, was not whether the Assembly did right or wrong, in a moral point of view, for that they were answerable to God; but when they appeal to Cæsar, under the laws of the Com-

monwealth, the simple question was, '*Has your Assembly*, that is charged with doing these acts, *the power, by the provisions of its Constitution, to do what it has done?*' Well, sir, the judgment of the Supreme Court," he continues, "affirms the fact; but I will not take time to read it. By virtue of that decision," he adds, "this Assembly is the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States. By virtue of that decision we hold our property, and have our records." (C. R., 43.) The Court of Appeals of Kentucky, in the Walnut Street Church case, appealed from the Louisville Chancery Court, *held:* "*That when a decision of an ecclesiastical tribunal is set up in civil courts, it is always open to inquiry, whether the tribunal acted within its jurisdiction, and if it did not its decision would not be conclusive.*" (Law Reg., July, '72, 450.) It was this decision which the general Assembly resisted by means of a fixed up case in the United States Courts, and thus beautifully exemplifies the doctrine to be subject unto "the powers that be," *provided* those powers be as you wish.

Here, then, are two decisions, one by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, and the other by the Court of Appeals of Kentucky, which entirely agree, and, both alike, rest on the principle that the acts of the General Assembly, when they draw into question civil rights, are open to the inquiry, by the civil court has the Assembly the power by its Constitution to do those acts? And if the civil courts may question the constitutionality of the Assembly when civil rights depend thereon, so, within the Church, may and must the acts of the same Assembly be judged by the Constitution when affecting only ecclesiastical rights and privileges, and have no validity nor binding force accorded to them unless authorized thereby. If the principle emerges in one case, so must it in all.

But does it not seem strange that the General Assembly, which for thirty years stood by and held its property and records and legal existence itself, under *one* of these decisions, that of Pennsylvania, should use that property and fill those records with proceedings to overturn *the other*, that of Kentucky, by procuring the decision of the Supreme Court of the United

States, to which reference has been made? Why this change? "*Tempora mutantur, in illis mutamur.*" The united General Assembly says it "*will not be slow to appreciate the value of this opinion,*" which it has taken such extraordinary steps to sanction with all its moral influence, and to spread broadcast over the world, and to incorporate in the forthcoming Digest as the accepted, final and ruling decision under which it proposes to hold and acquire property.

Could anything make it plainer than this statement, that the United Assembly is the worthy successor and heir of the Assembly whose assumption of power your Synod so long resisted, and which completely revolutionizes our Presbyterial system, overthrows our ecclesiastical liberty and resolves the Assembly into a spiritual despotism. It is against the principle of this thing that your Synod stands, and has stood. There is a persistent and irresistible logic in human nature, by virtue of which a false principle, once assumed and admitted, tends irresistibly to bring forth its legitimate fruits. The only safety to any people or to any organization, therefore, is in the strict observance of the maxim, *Obsta principiis*—oppose false and destructive principles in their incipiency. The heel of an infant may crush the head of a boa whose encoiling folds will, in the course of years, have acquired sufficient strength to crush the huge frame of an ox. "Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked."

It is not unreasonable to hope for a recovery to a better state of things. If in thirty years courts and Assemblies change from the right to the wrong, in a generation more they may possibly change again from the wrong to the right ground. For this prospect let us thank God and take courage. Especially are we encouraged to do so, since the United States Supreme Court heroically acknowledges that this opinion is novel and contrary to the precedents of the English courts; and also because, as shown by Judge Redfield of Boston, in the July *Law Register*, the decision amounts to a mere homily as to how such cases

ought to be decided, and has no binding authority or force, even in Kentucky, as a State court, of concurrent jurisdiction, had previously acquired jurisdiction of the case and decided it. Indeed, the decision, thus paraded in the minutes of the Assembly, is deprecated as having compromised our highest tribunal before the legal world. The lustre of the triumph of error is sure to be dimmed and its glory to be short-lived. Yea, verily, we may thank God and take courage. Even the Supreme Court of Missouri, although bewitched by a false theory of the government of the Presbyterian Church, yet was sufficiently true to its legal instincts not to follow that theory to the extreme of the United States Supreme Court. It is morally certain that this decision will and must be abandoned. Whatever may be its effect on other ecclesiastical bodies, it is incompatible with constitutional Presbyterianism. Nay more, it is, with regard to all the churches and the civil courts, unmistakably revolutionary; for it, *pro tanto*, transfers the jurisdiction of civil rights to the ecclesiastical courts, and divests the civil courts of their jurisdiction over all civil and property rights that depend on ecclesiastical decisions. If, as Justice Miller says, "the legal tribunals must accept such decisions as final and binding on them in their application *to the case before them*," then, if that case involve property or civil rights dependent on such decisions, there is no occasion left—it would be a mere farce to take it before the civil court, as it is already decided by the ecclesiastical court. In effect, the civil court simply declines to entertain such a case. If it is purely an ecclesiastical case, of course it has no business before the civil courts, and no sane man could suppose this august tribunal to stultify itself with such a solemn utterance of a mere truism. No, the court does not, cannot mean to say, that a man cannot have his purely ecclesiastical grievances redressed by a civil tribunal, but that civil rights, dependent on ecclesiastical decisions, cannot be protected by the civil courts. Never, in the history of the American Church, was such a mistake before made in the interest of irresponsible spiritual despotism, which tends to anarchy by destroying the sense of justice which underlies the peace of society.

The Church, every Church, ought to repudiate such a ruling. She cannot afford to accept it, whether for a temporary advantage or not; and only to think that a Presbyterian Assembly should have procured such a decision, and then have so thoroughly endorsed it! This gives good ground for open and organized resistance—if need be, another Declaration and Testimony from its people. It likewise adds increased impor-

tance and significance to the position of your Synod.—There are those of you who can testify that I was hopeful that the union of the two Assemblies, would result in wiser and more conservative counsels than had prevailed during the war. I had witnessed a great breaking away from the intensely vengeful and intolerant spirit that was so universal, and was, as ever, disposed to give men, and also organizations, the full benefit of their inconsistencies. Neither men nor Church courts are bound to be consistent with themselves. If so every sinner would go to perdition; but men are bound to be consistent with the truth. I was too hopeful, that with the passions of the hour would also dissolve the errors of the hour, especially in Church matters, under the light of God's truth. But the new Assembly, thus far, has, I fear, shown itself fatally consistent with its components during the years immediately preceding the union. My connection with a Presbytery of that Assembly does not imply any individual approbation of the offensive acts. There are many individuals that have not bowed the knee to them. When I was received by the New York Presbytery, it was on motion and with knowledge that I was from a Presbytery of your Synod. An individual is not an ecclesiastical court, occupies no territory, and has no jurisdiction. For a Synod to join in organic relation with the same body, would be to avow accordance of view with it instead of antagonism on the points of controversy which have given existtence to your Synod. This would be to deliberately surrender the truth and then vainly hope to recover it. It would have been gratifying to me, in various ways, had the way been clear for you to unite with this Assembly. But the Detroit Assembly has placed matters beyond the hope of present recovery; and I pledge myself to aid in the contest, already inaugurated, against this false and revolutionary ecclesiology. Whilst on its territory I can aid the present minority.

The Rev. D. X. Junkin, D. D., of Pennsylvania, in a communication to the *Philadelphia Presbyterian*, July 13, 1872, criticising the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, to which attention has been called above, uses these words:

"Permit me, then, Messrs. Editors, once for all, to record my respectful but earnest protest against the doctrine that any opinion or decision of a transient majority of our highest judicatory, apart from the Constitution, is *law*. That venerable court is neither *infallible* nor 'supreme,' to the extent of overriding the Constitution of the Church. In it the powers and duties of the General Assembly are *prescribed* and *limited;* and they can not, without the sin of *covenant-breaking*, violate that instrument. It

is the charter of our ecclesiastical liberties and rights, and the doctrine that its creature, the General Assembly, may at will *ignore* its principles, *violate* its guarantees, and *transcend* its limits, is either a doctrine of despotism or of anarchy.

"The very objects of a written Constitution are to guarantee the rights of individuals, the franchises of smaller communities, and the rights of minorities. In a written Constitution the people agree upon the principles by which they consent to be governed. If a majority may, regardless of the Constitution, decide and make law, then constitutions are of no use; they are a mockery and a snare, and the doctrine that is so fast gaining ground, both in civil and ecclesiastical organizations, that a majority is absolute, irrespective of fundamental law, is the most dangerous enemy to regulated liberty. The despotism of majorities, unrestrained by any social pact, is the worst despotism on earth; and I am profoundly convinced that, unless the growing disregard of the restraints of constitutional law can be arrested, anarchy or despotism will invade our civil liberties, and factious majorities will trample under foot our religious freedom."

The point now made is, that here is an issue made up on no doubtful principle; and that, consequently, unless one party or the other changes its ground, it is not possible that the Synod of Missouri and the Northern Assembly should unite "on conditions mutually acceptable."

Through the appointment of this committee to visit your Synod, and which put in an appearance, you were brought face to face with this Assembly for the first time, and this principle of *the supremacy of the constitution of our Church* at once emerges to view. You were cast forth six years ago from your Assembly as unfit for a place in it, because of your testimony to this one of the ideas of the Gospel. You must go wherever you go with it still on your lips, and ask those who desire official relations with you, do we agree on this fundamental doctrine as to the nature of the Presbyterian Church? This obstacle to organic union with the Northern Assembly is not of your creating or occasioning, nor is it private but public. I am sure, however, that it will not stand in the way of Christian *courtesies* and salutations between the two bodies, as I understand your attitude to be fraternal, charitable and cordial towards all Christian people and churches. I doubt not the Synod will feel obliged for the "sympathy" expressed and for the interest shown, and deeply regret the existence of any obstacle in the way of an organic fellowship.

But your Synod has stood true to the standard of the Presbyterian Church, loyal to her sovereign Head, and opposed to all

defection from him, preferring the affliction and contumely of being treated as an outcast rather than accept the rewards of a sinful apostacy from the historic position and practice of the true followers of Jesus. I slightly accommodate the language of another, and say: "Your members and ministers have done and suffered too much as the representatives of an unsecular, non-political church, to sacrifice it now upon the beguilement of a newly awakened sentimentalism in your neighbors. They must preserve the Church unspotted from the world. They have suffered contumely, poverty, and evil. They have been despoiled of churches and parsonages and schools. Some have suffered martyrdom. They have resisted unto blood, standing against the political defilement of the Church. *The great principle*—the exclusiveness of the spiritual vocation of the Church—*you have preserved intact.* Your struggles are historical, and the history is a sign of good things to come. It is a testimony—a testimony that the world cannot afford to lose. It witnesses against adulterous defections of the Church from Christ. You cannot now extinguish the lamp of your own history by hiding it under the bushel of any Church stained with political corruptions. It would be pitiable recreancy to indulge the thought." (S. R. 52.)

Is it not, however, reasonable to hope that some active and definitive steps may yet be taken by that powerful body to remove, on their part, at whatever cost of pride of opinion or of self-consistency, valuing most of all the consistency of the truth, every obstacle to a cordial fellowship of all the Presbyterian families? Unions on harmonious and sound principles, and such alone are matters of rejoicing and sources of true spiritual strength and blessedness; and may God hasten all such in his own good time and way.

I have intentionally dwelt somewhat on the principle of the constitutional subordination of the courts of the Church as presenting an insuperable obstacle, as I deeply deplore, in the way of your Synodical union with the Northern Assembly. There are other points which might have been urged with perhaps greater effect. But it was not on account of any doctrinal departure, so called, nor of any political deliverance directly, but immediately and solely on account of an unwarrantable assumption of irresponsible and unconstitutional control over your Synod by the Assembly of 1866, that forced it into an attitude of opposition which has resulted, in God's providence, in your independent position. The view above taken has thus been germain to your peculiar case—has been suggested by the specific nature of the particular action of the Assembly,

which was meant to dissolve your body, that action being not an interpretation of the standards of the Church or of the Bible, nor an adjudged application to the Synod of any known law of the Church, but a mere *naked resolution*, in the nature of a *decree*, as though the Assembly had the right, upon any grounds, to enact laws—to legislate for the Church, and to compel obedience from the courts of the Church on pain of dissolution; whereas, the Assembly has no inherent power or authority, its powers being wholly derivative, spiritual and declarative, so that "no Church judicatory ought to pretend to make laws, to bind the conscience in virtue of their own authority and all their decisions should be founded on the revealed will of God," as set forth in the standards of the Church.

But it is also understood that the Northern General Assembly accepts the position taken by the separate Assemblies on politics, "loyalty and freedom" prior to their union. Indeed, the two bodies came to be of one mind on these subjects, and that was accounted a circumstance most favorable to their union. Had they not been like-minded and resolved in these respects, no union would have been practicable on the basis of "the standards pure and simple," or on any other basis. The Assembly (O. S.) of 1866 adopted and published to the world this statement of its position:

"It thus appears that six General Assemblies in succession, including the present, have with remarkable unanimity, maintained the same position concerning the rebellion and concerning those engaged in it. After carefully reviewing the whole course of these years of strife and alienation, we find nothing to recall or modify in the deliverances which have been made. We have taken our position upon the clearest principles of the word of God, as set forth in our standards. We still extend to them (in the South) the hand of kindness, and desire that our former ecclesiastical fellowship may be restored, whenever it can be done upon those principles which six General Assemblies have announced. *To form a union with any organization upon any other basis, would only serve to bring together those who could not act in harmony, and to perpetuate strife and alienation.*" (D. P. 118.)

This position was consistently maintained up to the final dissolution of that Assembly; it never disclaimed those acts; but on the contrary, at its last regular meeting, when overtured to do so, it, in terms, refused to express any disapproval of its previous deliverances, and, therefore, it adhered to those utter-

ances, quietly letting their compatibility with the constitution of the Church take care of itself. (Min. 1869, pp. 924–5.)

If possible, our New School brethren overtopped all this:

"This General Assembly (N. S.) exhorts all the churches and ministers connected with this branch of the Presbyterian Church, and all our countrymen, to stand by their country . . . patient amid delays, undaunted by reverses, persistent and untiring in effort, until, by the blessing of God, the glorious motto, 'One Country, *One Constitution*, and ONE DESTINY,' shall be enthroned as the sublime fact of the present and the more sublime harbinger of the future." (Min. 1863.

Again:

"That the Government of these United States, as provided for by the Constitution, . . . forever excluded the modern doctrine of secession as a civil or political right."

Again:

"This Assembly (1866) adheres to the resolution passed by our Assembly of 1863 (Minutes, p. 42): "That the colored man should in this country enjoy the right of suffrage, in connection with all other men, is but a simple dictate of justice. The Assembly cannot perceive any good reason why he should be deprived of this right on the ground of his color or his race." Even if suffrage may not be universal, let it at least be impartial.

"In case such impartial suffrage is conceded, that we may still reap the legitimate fruits of our National victory over secession and slavery, and that treason and rebellion may not inure to the direct political advantage of the guilty, we judge it to be a simple act of justice, that the constitutional basis of representation in Congress should be so far altered as to meet the exigencies growing out of the abolition of slavery; and we likewise hold it to be the solemn duty of our National Executive and Congress to adopt only such methods of reconstruction as shall effectually protect all loyal persons in the States lately in revolt.

"As loyalty is the highest civil virtue, and treason the highest civil crime, so it is necessary for the due vindication and satisfaction of National justice, that the chief fomenters and representatives of the rebellion should, by due course and process of law, be visited with condign punishment."

Again:

"In Andrew Johnson, so unexpectedly called to the chair of our martyred Chief, the Assembly recognize a man distinguished for a long course of earnest effort to elevate the masses, and for a steady, consistent patriotism that neither the power nor the favor of a treasonable oligarchy has been able successfully to assail or seduce. We desire to pledge to

him, as our constitutional Chief Magistrate, our confidence and support in his efforts to vindicate the majesty of law; maintain the National Government in its just supremacy; destroy the spirit and counteract the workings of the evil system that created this war; inspire a just appreciation of the crime of treason and a true loyalty to the Government in the breasts of the masses of the white population of the South; and extend to the colored citizens of that section the practical enjoyment of those personal and political rights announced in the Declaration of Independence, but denied to them by a despotic aristocracy." (Minutes, 1865.)

Again:

"Let it not be said that, as a Church, we have nothing to do with civil legislation. The day has gone by when an intelligent Christian will affirm the doctrine that what is wrong in religion is right in politics. God has taught us, in this war, that the Church must conserve the State by instructing the people in the great principles of justice and inspiring them to practice the same."

And again:

"Our record as a Church we commit to the claim judgment of posterity, in the full assurance that there is neither a line nor a word the Christian patriotism of the future will desire to erase; not a single sentiment befitting our relation to this great conflict it will find unexpressed." (Minutes, 1865.)

All these utterances were fresh in the minds of both bodies in 1869 when the basis of Union was adopted by both assemblies in which the general accordance of views and principles as the underlying foundation of the transaction was expressed in the preamble in these words: "Believing that the interests of the Redeemer's Kingdom would be promoted by the healing of our divisions, and that the two bodies bearing the same name, having the same Constitution and each recognizing the other as *a sound and orthodox body according to the principles of the confession common to both*, cannot be justified by any but the most imperative reasons in maintaining separate and in some respects rival organizations." No such "reasons" existed and Union was consummated on the basis of the "common standards"—*i. e.*, both bodies accepted those standards in the same sense, which sense, so far as the points and principles now in mind are concerned, can best be gathered from the actual deliverances and course of action during several immediately preceding years as indicated. Some samples of those deliverances have been submitted, showing that with reference to the constitutional powers of the church courts and rules of procedure touching internal and purely ecclesiastical matters as well

as political and secular affairs, such latitudinarian and unscriptural views prevailed as to transform the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church under the magic of their prevailing influence into another kind of government and church order than that of the former days of strict construction. In the history of our country the political world has divided on the construction to be placed on the fundamental law of the State, and so it seems the day has for the second time come when Presbyterians must divide on the latitudinarian or the strict construction of the standards of the church. The great reason, as I conceive, why the Synod of Missouri and other strict constructionists feel such deep concern about the distinct and conscious recognition and practical observance of the strict construction of the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in regard to politics, loyalty, rebellion, slavery, freedom, suffrage, and the like "civil affairs," is, that the prevalence of the opposite latitudinarian views and corresponding course of action imperils the saving doctrines of the gospel. The Constitution is a unit, and all the parts must be viewed in their interdependence and organic and vital relations to "The Head, even Christ; from whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." "The way of the world is to *make* laws, but to *follow* customs. If men hesitate to destroy a constitution, they can fritter it away by explanation and construction. When a majority becomes very strong, the constitution may be amended with great facility; so that by amending it, or construing it away, or by trampling it under foot, the majority will get rid of all restraints of a written constitution, when it stands in the way of their will." "A majority shall govern," says our Book, but *no*, NEVER! in this worldly, politic, deceitful, devilish spirit of all unrighteousness.

It may be safely and can only be sadly affirmed, that the case thus made out, that the present Northren Assembly adheres to all the principles involved in the aforesaid bellum and post bellum deliverances, finds no relief in "The Concurrent Declaration" to which such considerable prominence has been given. That declaration is in the basis of union, and in the following words: "The official records of the two branches of the Church for the period of separation should be preserved and held as making up the one history of the Church; and no rule or precedent which does not stand approved by both the bodies, should be any authority until re-established in the

united body, except in so far as such rule or procedure may affect the rights of property founded thereon." (Min. 1869, p. 915.) This declaration is penned with great care, and had an important purpose to serve; but did the Assemblies, by concurring in it, mean thereby to renounce and repeal, in advance of their union, their political and secular utterances in the previous years? Manifestly it had no such purpose, but was meant as a prudent provision against any confusion that might arise out of the conflicting actions of the two bodies during their separate and not altogether friendly and consistent course of over thirty years. Had it been meant to repeal or to recall the acts objected to by you, it would not have been concurred in, but would have raised a storm. This interpretation of the "concurrent declaration" lies revealed on the face of its enactment. The kindly disposition of some good men to accommodate this declaration to the "furtherance" of organic union "upon terms of mutual confidence, respect, Christian honor, and love" (1870), and "on conditions mutually acceptable," (1872), has led the United Assembly into an attitude of questionable propriety, after due allowance for all that can be consistently embraced under the categories of "rules" and "precedents."

What answer can be given to the following impeachment?' especially when one considers the Walnut Street Church case, and, as some think, the not insignificant circumstance that the last Assembly appointed a committee of arrangements for taking part in the grand national and centennial jubilee of 1876—all glorious for citizens; but is this the business of the Church?

"Through several consecutive years, both branches of the now united Assemblies persisted in the utterance of political dogmas, which, whether true or false, they were inhibited by the word of God, and by their own statute law, from pronouncing in their ecclesiastical chambers. These unlawful utterances remain uncancelled upon the records of both the courts now amalgamated into one. No disavowal of them has been made, as of words inconsiderately uttered in times of high excitement. No counter declaration has been filed, gathering up the sacred truth of God in a new proclamation of the spirituality and independence of that kingdom which is not of this world." (D. P., p. 100.)

Whether viewed from a Southern or Northern standpoint, there may be something more than a warning—there may be an instructive study in the following picture, taken, as I suppose, from the easel of a Methodist Bishop who knows whereof he affirms:

"*Organized communities are governed by their own habit.*

"This never fails to override the most formal written enactments when they come into violent conflict with it. Many recent statutes are dead letters, because such is the state of *public opinion*, or, rather, such is the public habit, that they cannot be enforced.

"If you would form any safe opinion as to the future course of any organized community, look not at written compacts and constitutional guarantees, called into existence by some occasion, but read its history Find the direction of its current. Study its life. Ascertain its habits. *e. g.*

"No fact of American history is more patent than that it is the habit of the Methodist Episcopal Church to invade the domain of the State—to run into politics. It feels itself charged with the management of State affairs in important cases.

"To make the matter worse, she has a political history that she is proud of. The people, and especially the preachers of this Church, feel that, as a Church, they have done more to bring about the present condition of things in the country than any other class of people.

"They review their career as political agitators with the utmost complacency. It has been successful. It has been brilliant, not only in politics, but in war; they have run a triumphant course. It is a heroic history. They look upon themselves as having 'saved the country.' They carry with them the consciousness of the conqueror and the benefactor—all the result of the part they took in the politics of the country.

"So far as the past and the present can possibly give assurance of the future, it is certain that on all occasions that offer an issue, in which the Methodist conscience may deem itself concerned, the ecclesiastics of the Northern Church will be ready to go headlong into the canvass. She will be ever and anon upon the hustings. Her pulpit will again resound with the declaration of the demagogue, and her pews will send back the loud huzza.

"This is the more certain, because she has tasted the delicious rewards of the partizan. One of her chief ministers, soon after the war closed, in an address which was published, boasted that his Church had given more moral support and more men to the war than any other, and affirmed that a grateful government had recognized the service by giving many profitable contracts to members of it. Only let the occasion come, then, and this history will be repeated.

"Happy will the people be if the same Church shall not precipitate another war. It seems likely that all the varied scenes of history are to be enacted over again in our country.

"We have had a war of independence—the war of 1776. We have had a commercial war—the war of 1812. We have had insurrections—the whisky rebellion, and the Harper's Ferry raid. We have had, also, a great civil war. War is the staple of history, and, in all probability, we are not done with it, but have only had a foretaste. Is there not brewing already an agrarian war? Does not the firmament, also, portend a religious war?

"The public mind has been familiarized with it. The Methodist Church, North, has pioneered the way for the Romanist, and when his opportunity arrives he will not be slow to follow. Then there will be manœuvering and counter manœuvering, and provocation will respond to provocation. We vainly thought the civil war impossible. If we imagine a war of religion impossible in this county, we have studied history and human nature to little purpose. And when the fray comes the Northern Methodist will be the eager hotspur first in the saddle. The history of his Church, and the consciousness resulting from it, will insure this.

"The non-political character of the Church, South, as distinguished from the Church, North, is, we conceive, the most vital point of difference between the two bodies. It is a difference so fundamental, affecting the constitution of the Church so deeply that there can be no question of the Southern Church. All the deadliest apostacies of the Christian community have originated from ambitious connections with the State. From Constantine down, undue alliances between the ecclesiatic and the magistrate have originated and been the cause of all those monstrous corruptions which at times have threatened to make religion a hissing and a by-word in the earth forever. The Southern Church separated from the Northern (1844) that she might keep out of politics." (M. E. Chs. 58–62, 63.)

May I not give as a final touch to this picture and its companion from the easel of the Bishop, the ever-living petition of Burns—

"O wad some pow'r the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder frae us
And foolish notion:
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us
An' ev'en Devotion."

We turn now to consider the application of our criterion to the proposed union with the Southern Assembly.

It does not necessarily follow because there are good and sufficient reasons for not uniting with the Northern Assembly, that therefore your Synod should unite with the Southern Assembly. There may be abundant reason for the Synod standing independent of either Assembly, or for uniting, if at all, with some other branch of the Reformed Church. According to the criterion above given, and accepted as applicable to a valid solution of the practical problem before you, you are bound not to form any organic connection that sacrifices or manifestly imperils the fundamental principle of the supremacy of the law of the Church strictly construed, or any important application of it.

We have, at a glance, seen how matters stand as to the Northern Assembly. How do they stand with the Southern Assembly? To ascertain this, let the inquiry be conducted impartially and without prejudice. And in order to this, let me say, at the very outset, that the imputation of *sectionalism* is out of the question. This sectionalism is a two-edged weapon, and cuts both ways. Those who wish the Synod to go into a Northern connection are just as obnoxious to this imputation of sectionalism as are their brethren who seek for it a different relation. We go farther, and reprobate this *spirit* of sectionalism as "strange fire" on God's altar. "The passions of the war are already greatly mitigated. They will soon die away entirely. But however politicians, or even political ecclesiastics, may fan the smouldering embers of embittered feeling to serve paltry, personal, or party ends, Christian men will 'seek peace and ensue it.' They will do whatever may be consistent with truth and compatible with vital interests to promote the return of the era of good feeling in the country. For this they will sacrifice anything, except their fealty to truth and righteousness. By every impulse of the regenerate heart, and every consideration of duty, good men will promote the triumph of love. If the Church, South, or North, has no reason for continued separate existence other than the passions of the war, let her be blotted out. If, indeed, her organization from the first was merely in the interest of or in opposition to slave property, as her enemies assert, then she never had any just title to existence, and the sooner she perishes the better." (M. E. Chs. 16—). This language was originally used with reference to the Methodist churches, North and South, and the sectional reproach cast on the good name of the Southern Methodist Church is wiped away, and

it is manfully shown that the two grounds of the separation were, 1—*The supremacy of the law of the Church*, the question of slavery being merely the *occasion* on which that supremacy of the law was tested; and 2—"The Southern Methodist Church separated from the Northern *that she might keep out of politics.* Each has followed the logic of 1844"—the date of the separation.

In regard to the Southern General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, it not only in common with the Northern Assembly accepts the Westminster standards entire, but, unlike that Assembly, it accepts them on the theory of *strict construction.* It is a singular and most interesting fact, and under the circumstances, a distinguishing glory of your Synod, that it is the only remaining portion of the General Assembly (O. S.) as it existed after the organization of the Southern Assembly at Augusta, Georgia, in December, 1861, that now remains, and that, too, holding to the standards in their *ante-bellum sense*—in their ante-Spring Resolutions sense. It is just as notorious a fact that the Southern Assembly was organized on the old standards in this old school ante-bellum, strict construction sense. This is positively asserted in the famous *Address* issued by that body immediately after organizing, in which it is said:

"The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States—that is to say, the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, the Form of Government, the Book of Discipline, and the Directory for Worship—were unanimously and solemnly declared to be the Constitution of the Church in the Confederate States with NO OTHER CHANGE than the substitution of Confederate for United wherever the country is mentioned in the standards. The Church, therefore, in these seceded States, presents now the spectacle of a separate, and independent and complete organization, under the style and title of the Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America. In thus taking its place among sister Churches of this and other countries, it seems proper that it should set forth the causes which have impelled it to separate from the Church of the North." (D. P. 6, 65.)

This solemn declaration of "NO OTHER CHANGE" than that of name must, of course, go for nothing, if it is not made good by action. And yet there is some virtue in merely *starting right, so far as this acceptance of the standards in the old and strict sense* is concerned. There is something conservative and presumptively favorable even in that. But it is true, and a matter of record and of history, that reflects great honor upon the name of the Assembly, South, that it has up to this time con-

tinued to maintain that original position with remarkable fidelity and consistency.

1. The Southern Assembly adhered to the position of the undivided Old School Assembly before the war *on the subject of slavery.* I quote again from the Address:

"In the first place, we would have it distinctly understood, that in our ecclesiastical capacity, we are neither the friends nor the foes of slavery, that is to say, we have no commission either to propagate or abolish it. The policy of its existence or non-existence is a question which exclusively belongs to the State. We have no right, as a Church, to enjoin it as a duty, or to condemn it as sin. Our business is with the duties that spring from the relation; the duties of the masters on the one hand, and of their slaves on the other. These duties we are to proclaim and to enforce with spiritual sanctions. The social, civil, political problems connected with this great subject transcend our sphere, as God has not entrusted to His Church the organization of society, the construction of governments, nor the allotment of individuals to their various stations. The Church has as much right to preach to the monarchies of Europe and the despotisms of Asia, the doctrines of republican equality, as to preach to the governments of the South the extirpation of slavery. This position is impregnable, unless it can be shown that slavery is a sin." (D. P. 14.)

Beyond controversy, the accepted position of the undivided Old School Assembly before the war was expressed in the historic deliverance of 1845, penned by the Rev. Dr. Rice, now President of your Synodical College. Here are its lucid words:

"The Church of Christ is a spiritual body, whose jurisdiction extends to the religious faith and moral conduct of her members. She cannot legislate where Christ has not legislated, nor make terms of membership which He has not made. The question, therefore, which the Assembly is called to decide, is this: Do the Scriptures teach that the holding of slaves, without regard to circumstances, is a sin, the renunciation of which should be made a condition of membership in the Church of Christ?"

"It is impossible to answer this question in the affirmative, without contradicting some of the plainest declarations of the Word of God." (Digest.)

The Southern Assembly, observe, continued to occupy that ante-bellum ground, and maintained it throughout the war; and when the war was closed it promptly made the following utterance in a pastoral letter "*read and unanimously adopted,*" 1865, to-wit:

"This relation is now overthrown, suddenly and violently; whether

justly or unjustly, in wrath or in mercy, for weal or for woe, let history and the Judge of all the earth decide.

"Whatever, therefore, we may have to lament before God, either for neglect of duty or for actual wrong toward our servants, while the relation lasted, we are not called, now that it has been abolished, to bow the head in humiliation before men, or admit that the memory of many of our dear kindred is to be covered with shame because, like Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they had bond-servants born in their house, or bought with their money; and who now, redeemed by the same precious blood, sit down together in the kingdom of God.

"The other consideration connected with this subject is *The present condition of this people.*

"You are bound to them not only by the ties of a common nature, a common sin, but a common redemption also. They have grown up around and in your households, have toiled for your benefit, ministered to your comforts and wants, and have often tenderly, faithfully nursed you in sickness. They are still around your doors, in the bosom of your community. Many of them are your fellow-heirs of salvation. Together with you, they all need it; greatly need it for time—for eternity. We are persuaded you will not turn away from them in this day of imagined millennium—we fear of terrible calamity. Do all you can for their best welfare, and do it quickly, for they already begin to pass rapidly away. "By pureness, by knowledge, by long suffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, by the word of God, by the armor of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, by honor and by dishonor, by evil report and good report," let it be shown to all men that nothing shall withdraw the sympathy of your heart or the labor of your hand from a work which must of necessity and ever rest chiefly upon those who dwell in the land, not upon the strangers who visit it. If their condition is made better, if souls are plucked as brands from the burning you will have the comfort of knowing that you were, under God, instrumental in such happy results. Should our worst fears be realized, and their doom be sealed, you will have a pure conscience at the bar of the final Judge." [Minutes, 1865.

Here we have a unanimous action at the first organization of that Assembly in 1861, and also a unanimous action after the close of the war agreeing with each other and both entirely agreeing with the position of the undivided Assembly (O. S.) before the war.

The imperative claims of truth and justice demand that, *as a matter of fact*, the position of the Southern Assembly on this subject shall be accepted as set forth in these extracts. This is a fair exhibit and any attempt to discredit it must be by garbled terms and phrases or loose assertions. An honest-

minded man is always willing to accept the truth, whether it makes for him or against him. Whether right or wrong, the Southern Assembly has never been abolitionized, but has stood on the scriptural basis of the standards, and regarded abolitionism, as did the Old School Assembly in its accepted position before the war, as in contravention of the teachings of God's word and the practice of the Apostles, and therefore infidel and pernicious in its moral bearings. 1 Tim. vi. 1–5.

"True, Mr. Moderator, this was done a great many years ago, but let me respectfully remind you, that sin does not loose its foul odor by years, neither is the savor of righteousness impaired by the lapse of time." Principles do not change.

2. There was, moreover, "no other change" than one of name on questions involving the relations of Church and State. It may be affirmed with emphasis that the fidelity with which the Assembly South adhered to the letter as well as the spirit of the accepted standards in this respect is in glaring contrast with what we have seen was the course pursued by the Assemblies North. As they assumed to pronounce and denounce slavery a sin, so, in like manner, did they undertake to dispose of the secular and political questions of secession and rebellion, to condemn them in the given case, *as sinful*, without any authority whatever from God's word and the standards to do so in any case. According to the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church, these questions do not fall within her spiritual jurisdiction. In the language of the admirable statement of 1845, "The Church of Christ is a spiritual body, whose jurisdiction extends to the *religious* faith and *moral* conduct of her members. She cannot legislate where Christ has not legislated, nor make terms of membership which He has not made." And this only accords with the Book itself in various parts, and especially with the admirable statement of our Confession of faith. Ch. xxxi. 4.

"Synods and Councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical; and are not to intermeddle with civil affairs which concern the Commonwealth, unless by way of humble petition in cases extraordinary, or by way of advice, for satisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto required by the civil magistrate."

It is, then, of "religious" and not of *political* faith, of "moral" and not of *civil* conduct of which the Church has spiritual jurisdiction.

The special cases of "*petition*" and "*advice required*" never have arisen with us, but should they arise, they would make no trouble, but have to be disposed of consistently with the

general principle laid down. The *fundamental error* on this subject into which, on departing from this principle, the Assemblies fell whose theory the Union Assembly has inherited, was, that of assuming that it is the right and the duty of the Assembly to adjudge the moral character of such "civil affairs" as State rights, State sovereignty, State allegiance, loyalty, secession, rebellion and the like, and to dogmatically pronounce them sinful in any given case; whereas all such questions, just as did slavery, lie within the sphere and belong to the category of things in themselves indifferent, to be judged by the individual conscience. Christ has not legislated on such things, or rather He has so legislated as to leave them to the individual conscience.

Forms of government are things manifestly indifferent. The people of God have lived and may conscientiously live under all forms of government, and *the right of revolution* has been asserted and practiced by the followers of Christ in every age; and to obey or to rebel against human government is not necessarily, but may be, either a virtue or a sin in the sight of God. This is wholly determined by circumstances, of which, not priests nor Church courts, but the individual conscience must judge as accountable before Him. In the world's code the lustre or the turpitude of the act of rebellion depends on the provocation coupled with the *failure* or *success* of the undertaking. Washington became the paragon of all political virtue because he had a just cause and succeeded, but had he failed, however just his cause, his name, in the view of his enemies, would have borne down in history the odium and odor of disloyalty, rebellion and treason, notwithstanding the justice of his cause. Christian ethics scorn such a capricious standard, whether set up out of or in the Church. The duties which God imposes on man's conscience respecting the powers that be do not stand in necessary relation to any particular form of government, or the success or failure of any particular political or civil act or venture. As to that the Church is indifferent, her commission and constitution being compatible alike with all forms of government, whether democratic, representative, oligarchical or monarchical, whether constitutional or personal; whether mixed or pure, and so she has no *right* to sit in judgment on or "intermeddle with the civil affairs" of the citizen, as to his opinions, or conduct, or property, which concern his commonwealth and not the Church, whose business is wholly with men as the subjects of Christ, whose "kingdom is not of this world." There is no such thing as political duties rising into the sphere of Christian

ethics, so as to warrant the Church to enforce particular political conduct and opinions by the sanctions of religion and by the authority of Christ.

How often has it been urged with unresisted force, and accepted and acted on as an axiom or unquestionable principle, that civil affairs or political questions have a moral side, and hence Church courts, as the guardians of morals, public and private, are not only at liberty, but in duty bound, to interpret such questions and affairs in their moral character and bearings, and thus afford the public needed guidance in matters of moral import.

This specious and delusive plea has misled some of the best of men. So far from its being true, it is the *principium* of "a vast brood of fatal heresies," as a moderate measure of discrimination will render perfectly palpable. It is only a phase of that weakness in human nature that disposes it to shift to organizations matters of personal and individual responsibility.

When it is said that political questions rise into the sphere of morals, I ask attention immediately to the farther inquiry, *which sphere?* There are three spheres of morals, which must not be confounded: 1. The sphere of things necessarily right, as love to God and the persons of men; 2. The sphere of things necessarily wrong, as hatred of God or man; and 3. The sphere of things indifferent, and which belong to neither of the foregoing categories, as styles of dress, forms of governments, meats, drinks and the like. This distinction is as old as Aristotle, and will be found set forth articulately in his scientific treatise on ethics, so that it would be reasonable to expect a heathen of intelligence to know and recognize it. Now, it is over this third sphere of things, in their nature indifferent, that private judgment and the individual conscience preside, and it is to this third sphere that the relation of master and servant, and such other "civil affairs" as forms of government, secession, loyalty, rebellion and the like belong. And when any power in the Church or the State proposes to take such questions out of the grasp of the individual conscience where nature and reason place them, let an authority be shown to which conscience is bound to submit.

Conscience is superior to human law. It is not bound by statute. Its behests are imperative. It testifies against and seeks the overthrow of any law that oppresses it, by refusing obedience to the precept and submitting to the penalty of the law. This it does till the law can be changed, either peacefully or by revolution. Whilst man's moral nature is in a

normal state and asserts its sway, no rule but one of righteousness can receive the endorsement of conscience and be assured of its future.

"But Peter and John answered and said unto them, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye."—Acts iv. 19.

Those who recall the giant discussion in Congress (1850–51) respecting the *higher law*, in which such men, such political gods, as Webster and Clay participated, cannot forget that a lack of discrimination in this very particular was its weak and vulnerable point. The ablest vindication of the simple truth that appeared in that trying time was from the pen of Dr. Charles Hodge in the *Princeton Review*. Bating some noted exceptions, it is a little remarkable that the very class of men who then were impassioned, almost blatant, in their advocacy of the supremacy of the individual conscience over all human authority, should have since sunk down into the abject degradation of advocating passive obedience.

It is essential to civil as well as religious liberty that no human authority, whether under the forms of Church or State, be allowed to lord it over conscience, or to wrest from the grasp of its jurisdiction what rightfully belongs to it. God alone has the right to restrain or control it. If the Church courts had any rightful authority to pronounce such things as slavery, secession, rebellion, *sins*, they had a right to do all else. They were bound, however, to *show* that authority from the Constitution of the Church and the word of God, and then they would have been justified, and not otherwise, in making as they did, *such sins*, unrepented of and unrenounced, terms barring from admission into Presbytery and from communion in the Church. But this they could not do.

Both Assemblies fell into the vicious mistake of assuming to themselves and asserting, without proof, a jurisdiction with which the authority of Christ never invested them.

For ecclesiastical courts to usurp jurisdiction over questions which belong, and are left by God, to the sphere of private judgment and of the individual conscience, is the very essence of spiritual oppression and despotism, even as it is the essence of civil and political despotism, oppression and tyranny for the civil court or magistrate to invade or enter beyond the limit set by law, the holy precincts of private and individual rights and liberties, such as freedom of speech and of opinion and liberty in the choice of religion and the like. In each case we say to the Church and to the State: thus far shall

thou go and no farther. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word it is because there is no light in them."

Let the lawful authority be shown, or the assumption of such jurisdiction and the attempt to exercise such powers must anticipate a sturdy resistance from every man who knows his rights and knowing, dares defend them. To act otherwise were to be willing slaves, in passive submission to the overthrow of truth and righteousness in our very streets.

I frankly confess that as I gaze and reflect upon the position of your little band, its moral sublimity fills me with admiration and thanksgivings, and I feel borne aloft by the conviction that for all your affliction and trials, in the midst of which the hearts of some may have sickened and the knees of others weakened, God has in store for you some glorious reward. Founded on the Rock of Ages, standing upon the old foundation unmoved amidst the surging billows that have broken over you and carried others from their moorings, the eyes of the Christian world are turned toward you with admiration and rejoicing.

Hymn 564.—"On the Rock of Ages founded,
What can shake thy sure repose?
With salvation's wall surrounded,
Thou mayest smile at all thy foes."

Hymn 420.—"Shout ye little flock and blest,
Soon you'll enter into rest;
There your seat is now prepared,
There your kingdom and reward.

"Fear not, brethren, joyful stand
On the border of your land,
Jesus Christ, our Father's Son,
Bids us undismayed go on.

"Lord, submissive make us go,
Gladly leaving all below;
Only thou our Saviour be,
And we still will follow thee."

In that classic incident of the Saviour's life bearing on this subject, we find, as it were, the text on which these views are little more than a comment. Two parties, the Herodians and the Pharisees, diametrically and violently opposed to each other, conspired to entrap the Saviour with a wary question. By a flattering address they attempt to fill him with indifference to

human authority and conceit as an independent and fearless teacher, and then ask, "Is it lawful for us to give tribute unto Cæsar or not?" The Herodians were the loyal party, and had Christ answered that it was *not* lawful to pay tribute, they stood ready at once to arrest and accuse him as a traitor. The Pharisees were, with respect to the Roman Government, the disloyal party, and violently opposed to the tribute, and had Christ answered that it was *lawful* to pay the tribute, he would have been caught in their snare and doomed as the victim of their conspiracy and wrath. But how, as a matter of fact, did the case end? "And they could not take hold of his words before the people, and they marvelled at his answer and held their peace."—Matt. 22. It is, therefore, perfectly manifest that he did not answer their question, either *yes* or *no*, either affirmatively or negatively, he did not undertake to pronounce for or against either the loyal or the disloyal party. What then did he do? for what he did filled both parties with amazement, and utterly disarmed them in his presence, when he answered, "Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's." He simply referred the "civil matter" in question to each man's own conscience. Upon that principle He had acted himself and He left others free to do the same.

The following pertinent incident, interesting as a piece of practical casuistry under this view of things, is furnished from the experience of a pastor of Brooklyn, Rev. Dr. Van Dyke, and is equal to any of Dr. Spencer's sketches. He gave it in the Assembly of 1866, thus:

"And here let me solicit your attention to the real question at issue. It was not in dispute whether Christians are bound to obey 'the powers that be.' On that point there was and is no dispute; and you will permit me to say respectfully, that it is not ingenuous for members of this Assembly to persist in charging upon the minority of this House, or upon the ministers and members of our Southern churches, the folly and the wickedness of denying the Scriptural doctrine on this subject.

"We all admit that Christians are bound, by their allegiance to Christ, to obey civil magistrates and to reverence lawful authority. But the question in dispute was, 'what under the Constitution of the United States, are the powers that be?' And, just here, I beg leave to relate a little of my own personal experience. Every Sabbath since I was ordained I have persisted in the habit, which I learned from the word of God and the example of my old pastor, and have prayed publicly for the President of the United States and 'all in authority.' I have done this under successive Presidents, and in the face of reproach from members of both political parties.

"Soon after the commencement of the war, a friend complained to me that he did not like the way that I prayed. 'Very well,' said I; 'teach me how to pray.' 'Whom do you mean,' said he, 'by all in authority? Do you include Jeff. Davis?' I answered, 'Is Jeff. Davis in authority?' He replied in the affirmative. 'Very well, then, he is included.' 'No,' he passionately exclaimed, 'he is *not* in authority.' 'Very well, then,' said I, 'he is *not* included.' 'But,' resumed my friend, 'it is a disputed question whether he is in power or no.' 'Very well, again,' said I, 'the omniscient God is able to settle that disputed question, and let him answer my prayers, which are offered in direct compliance with his word, according to his own infallible knowledge of the facts. I do not come to the mercy-seat to argue questions of constitutional law.'

"This, sir, in my judgment, is the true position for a Christian minister to occupy; and I would to God that our General Assembly had stood firm in this position during all these years of strife and confusion."

And to this I will only add the general reflections of another, of no less a name than the Rev Robert J. Breckenridge, D.D., LL.D., who so surprisingly forgot the principle he here so tersely enunciates:

"Nothing in the history of society is more remarkable than the strength of that tendency to confound and identify its civil and religious institutions, which has manifested itself in all ages.

"In that spiritual Kingdom manifested in the visible Church, and whose true seat is within us, neither time, nor place, nor condition, nor race has any vital significance; nor can flesh and blood inherit it; nor does anything avail but the new creature. Its union with the civil power is the highest aggravation of confounding it with the world—for the State is the highest form in which the world appears. So that neither the Visible Church, nor the Civil Power, can have any duty, either toward God or itself, or each other, more clear and transcendent, than that each should confine itself with respect to the other to its own obvious sphere—each regarding the other as the ordinance of the common Father and God of both. * * *

"And all corrupt churches which have sought the closest union with the civil power, have done so, not in order to submit themselves to the dominion of the State, but rather to subject it to tyranny as relentless as that which they made it the instrument of inflicting. To plead for the freedom of the Church is, therefore, to plead, at the same time, for the independence of States, and for the security of mankind against the cruelties of all false religion. * * * It is precisely in this absolute and exclusive headship of Christ, and the consecration of his Church to Him responsive thereto, that the root of her inward freedom lies; just as it is on her entire separation from the world, that her outward

freedom is grounded, and can be manifest."—*Knowledge of God Subjectively Considered, chap. xxii., and quoted in "D. and T."*

It was understood the world over, and by none better than those who at home and abroad opposed her conservatism, that the undivided General Assembly (O. S.) before the war, held, as bound to it of God, the position set forth above. Now let the records of the Southern Assembly from the time of its separate organization onward speak for it. Was its position accordant therewith or not? At its first meeting it said:

"We have separated from our brethren of the North as Abraham separated from Lot—because we are persuaded that the interests of true religion will be more effectually subserved by two independent churches, under the circumstances, than by one united body.

"The course of the last Assembly, at Philadelphia, conclusively shows that if we should remain together, the political questions which divide us as citizens, will be obtruded on our Church courts, and discussed by Christian ministers and elders with all the acrimony, bitterness and rancor with which such questions are usually discussed by men of the world. Our Assembly would present a mournful spectacle of strife and debate. Commissioners from the Northern would meet with Commissioners from the Southern Confederacy, to wrangle over the questions which have split them into two Confederacies, and involved them in furious and bloody war. They would denounce each other, on the one hand, as tyrants and oppressors, and on the other, as traitors and rebels. The Spirit of God would take His departure from these scenes of confusion, and leave the Church lifeless and powerless, an easy prey to the sectional divisions and angry passions of its members." (Min. 1861.)

In substance it is here said, better be separate than to mix politics with religion.

It should be recalled, in this connection, that Dr. Hodge, speaking of the action of 1861 in his own behalf, and in behalf of about sixty other members of that Assembly, published to the world the following judgment: "It pronounces or assumes a particular interpretation of the Constitution. This is a matter clearly beyond the jurisdiction of the Assembly. * * * The General Assembly, in thus deciding a political question, and in making that decision practically a condition of membership to the Church, has, in our judgment, *violated the Constitution of the Church and usurped the prerogative of its divine Master.*"

In reviewing the situation at its meeting, 1865, just after the war had closed in the field, the General Assembly, South, says:

"How often both of these great principles have been trampled into the dust within a few years past, melancholy facts most fully attest. Of

all such utter confusion of the things of Cæsar with the things of God, it becomes our people to beware, and against it faithfully to bear witness. The events passing before us bring up with fresh power the importance of keeping in mind this very point, this vital truth, that the Church of Christ is indeed a *spiritual* kingdom, and is *therefore* like Mount Zion that abideth forever. The Church is safe through the deluge, but only in her own ark, not in the Ark of the State. It is owing to this fact, and to this only, that she rides out the storms that leave the shores of this world strewn with the wreck of everything which the hand of man has constructed."

"During the prevalence of this war, 'the higher powers' actually bearing rule over most of our bounds, and to which under the word of God we were required to be 'subject,' were the government of the Confederate States, and those of the several States constituting it. By the event of the war, the first has been overthrown, and the second, as constituents thereof, are changed. The 'higher powers,' now bearing rule over us, are confessedly the government of the United States, and those existing in the States wherein we reside. The rightfulness of these several authorities, or to which of them the allegiance of our people, as citizens, was, or is primarily due, are matters upon which a judicatory of the Church has no right to pronounce judgment. The relation of the Church of Christ to civil governments is not one *de jure*, but *de facto*. As right and good, or wrong and wicked, they rise and fall by the agency or permission of God's Providence. In either case, the attitude of the Church towards them is essentially the same. As long as they stand and are acknowledged, obedience is to be enjoined as a duty, factious resistance condemned as a sin. But in regard to conflicts between existing governments, or as to movements in society, peaceful or otherwise, to effect political changes, the Church as such has no more control over them than it has over the polls of the country. If it has authority to uphold on the one side, it has equal power to condemn on the other; if to suppress a political movement, then also to instigate it. In truth it has neither; and to assert the contrary is to corrupt the Church in its principles, forever embroil it with the strifes of the world and plunge it headlong into ruin.

"Under these views, and considering the extraordinary conflict through which the country has passed, as well as the extraordinary circumstances in which it is now placed, it is incumbent upon us to exhort you, brethren, 'to obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." Fulfil with scrupulous fidelity all your obligations to the governments of the land; remembering the duty of this compliance, 'not only for wrath, but also for conscience' sake.' 'For so is the will of God, that with well-doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.'"

These views are forcibly repeated in 1866:

"Upon no one subject is the mind of this Assembly more clearly ascertained, upon no one doctrine is there a more solid or perfect agreement amongst those whom this Assembly represents, than the non-secular and non-political character of the Church of Jesus Christ.

"The power of the Church is exclusively spiritual, that of the State includes the exercise of force. The constitution of the Church is a divine revelation, the constitution of the State must be determined by human reason and the course of providential events. The Church has no right to construct a government for the State, and the State has no right to frame a creed or policy for the Church. They are as planets moving in different orbits, and unless each is confined to its own tract, the consequences may be as disastrous in the moral world as the collision of different spheres in the world of matter.' The early assertion of this radical distinction, at the very opening of our history, commits us to the maintenance and defense of the crown rights of the Redeemer, whether on the one hand they be usurped by the State, or whether, on the other, they be renounced by any portion of God's professing people. Summoned thus in the providence of God to contend for the same principles for which our martyr fathers of the Scottish Reformation testified even to the death, and which the fathers of the Southern Presbyterian Church labored so earnestly to secure and rejoiced in having obtained their full recognition by the civil government in America, it would be most happy if all those in the different branches of the Presbyterian family who are called to renew the protest, could be united in one homogeneous body for the reassertion of Christ's royal supremacy in and over His spiritual kingdom, the Church. The scattered testimony of separate and individual witnesses would deepen in intensity if gathered into one volume and rolled against those who would place the crown of Jesus upon the head of Cæsar. In view of all which, this Assembly would tender the hand to all who are of like mind with us as to the doctrines of grace and to the order and discipline of God's house: that as one compacted Church, we may oppose a breakwater against the current which is sweeping from its moorings our common Protestantism, until the doctrine of the Church as a free spiritual commonwealth shall regain its ascendancy not only over the Presbyterian but over the whole American Protestant mind." Minutes, 1866.

Now, it should be borne in mind that the Assembly South intended the expression of these oft-repeated Old School views to be antagonistic *in principle* to those of the Assembly North, to which utterance was given during and after the late war between the States, against which the Declaration and Testimony protested, and against which the Synod of Missouri, in

common with others, raised in clarion tones her voice of renunciation and warning, and presented a front, which though broken by those unequal to the occasion, has remained firm and unyielding to this present time.

It has been retorted that the Assembly South accepted the same principle of action as the Assembly North, and that the only difference was in the sectional application of it. "*Physician, heal thyself.*" So far as the course and position of the Synod of Missouri is concerned in opposing the old Assembly, there is not the shadow of foundation for such a retort; nor can this counter accusation against the Assembly South be sustained. There is nothing in the records upon which it can fix, in the whole career of the Assembly South, that gives an apparently substantial foundation for this *ad hominem* retort, if it is not found in a single sentence in a pastoral letter of the Assembly, 1862, addressed, as they state, to the ministers and members of our churches, and to the young men of our congregations in the army of the Confederate States." Here is that sentence: "We have been called on to witness the desolations of the land, and to mourn over the wastes of Zion, created by the havoc of war; and from all our churches we hear the report that the ranks of the armies of our national independence are crowded with the noblest of our brethren, and with the choicest of our youth, who have rushed to the rescue of the Republic, driven by the impulses of patriotism, and in obedience to the calls of God and our country."

Now the most that can be said of this passage is that the clause, "*in obedience to the calls of God*," assumes and implies, an endorsement of their position in the abitrament of a political issue, as right and just and dutiful before God. Undoubtedly, by *implication* and *inference*, the principle of the Constitution of the Church, that "Synods and Councils are to handle or conclude nothing but that which is ecclesiastical," trembled in their grasp at that dread moment. But candor compels the acknowledgment that this incidental statement and all other "scant allusions to the historical reality of a great struggle then pending," were only transient lapses from the articulate and dogmatic position of the body making them. They were transient *inconsistencies*, and were not accordant with the formally avowed stand of the body on the great constitutional principle involved. And truth requires the recognition of the fact that the Assembly has formally and repeatedly acknowledged these utterances—I use its language—to be "INCONSISTENT with the judicially pronounced principle upon which the Southern Assembly entered upon its

troubled career." The Assembly is entitled to the benefit of this explanation and disavowal. It placed itself at the outset on the position of the undivided Assembly before the war, making "no other change" than of name, and specifically and articulately in opposition to the departure from it in 1861. That it faltered at all amidst the pressure and confusion of the times, is not the surprise, but rather that it did not fall away from the truth like others. The surprise is that its garment of praise, as a spiritual body, was not burned up instead of only being scorched a little, and having upon it the smell of fire. The surprise is that it has had the grace to acknowledge before the world its *inconsistency* in any transient departure, and to show its appreciation of the superior claims of the consistency of truth and principle over a false consistency with self in error, and to distinctly and emphatically re-avow and proclaim to the world that it stands upon, not its errors and departures, as has been the case with others, but upon the original Old School strict construction principles of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. Awaking as from a terrible delirium and finding that a false and treacherous principle had, in an interval of paroxysm, stealthily insinuated itself into its bosom, it hurled it with indignation from its embrace, and placed its heel upon it as a deadly viper. Actions speak, if possible, louder than words in vindication of the truth in this case.

The Synod of Kentucky became, like your Synod, the chosen victim of the *ipso facto* "edict," and afterward, without compromise, and upon explicit terms, saving everything in its position or yours, assumed organic relations, still mainfained, with the Southern Assembly, which, in consummating the union, took this action:

"That the Assembly feels free solemnly to assure the Synod of Kentucky not only of our cordial approval of, and sincere concurrence substantially in, the Synod's statement of doctrine and constitutional principles, but of our sincere joy to find our brethren of Kentucky so ready to unite with us in solemn covenant, with a view, among other things, to the advancement and maintenance of these doctrines and principles as against the apparent Erastian tendencies of our American Protestantism."

This statement, thus satisfactorily concurred in by the Assembly, South, was made under the intelligent eyes of such men as the Rev. Drs. Stuart Robinson, S. R. Wilson and S. B. McPheeters, whom your Synod delights, and has reason, to honor, and whose eventful struggle for the spirituality of

Christ's kingdom has become a part of the history of the American Church.

Now, if these things be so, what do we find in the position of your Synod that distinguishes it from that of the Southern Assembly? It would really seem that the only thing important to be considered in determining the question before you, that remains, is merely *territorial* and *formal*. Your *peculiar territory* is, of course, inalienable, but would not a formal union with those who hold the standards with like mind, give breadth, depth and power to the outflow of *your* Christian sympathies and to the inflow of the blessings of sanctified fellowship with brethren who feel and declare themselves to be one with you in all that distinguishes you from others as a portion of the visible Church of Christ? As Presbyterians, to whose principles and order you are everywhere spoken of as staunchly devoted, you must and do, of course, recognize the importance of the principle, whilst you exercise all due discretion and liberty in its application to your particular case and situation "that the several different congregations of believers, taken collectively, constitute one Church of Christ, called emphatically *the Church*." The social principle in all its power is organized and sanctified by our precious religion, and the communion of different parts of the visible Church which are one in spirit, faith and order if of God's appointment, as we believe, should be, and God designs it to be, a means of grace like unto a participation in the visible sacraments.

You will not fail to observe that I have assumed that you are strictly one with the Southern Assembly in doctrine and in the reception of the doctrinal standards. In this respect, the Assembly South occupies the same ground, walks in the same "old paths," as the undivided Assembly before the war, without the slightest qualification or change. The work of revising the Book of Discipline and Form of Government upon which the Assembly of 1857 entered, does not touch the doctrinal symbols, but was resumed by the Southern Assembly sometime since, with the view, *if possible*, of guarding in the future against such loose and unwarrantable interpretations of the governmental symbols as precipitated your Synod into such trouble. That conservative and well-meant work is still pending, and there is no portion of the Church whose experience and voice would have greater weight than yours in settling the result, so as to preclude loose construction.

Moreover, it is the simple truth that the Southern general Assembly did not compromise its Old School position in any

respect in receiving the New School into union "on the basis of our symbols of doctrine and order, interpreted and adhered to according to the plain and obvious sense of the ordination engagements," and under "the existing charter" of their own body.

An important matter is now pending and in a most favorable aspect, it is understood, having an important bearing on the view that the Christian world takes of the Southern Assembly as a sound and conservative body. Of all the offspring of the Reformation, no Christian body stands higher in Europe or America than the body which has commonly been styled the Dutch Reformed Church. It is the first, the oldest Presbyterian Church in America.

The first occupation of New York took place, 1613, by the Dutch. It was a military post, in the interest of the fur trade, till 1624, when an agricultural settlement was made, care being taken to send over *a minister and a schoolmaster.* Forty years afterward, 1664, when the Dutch surrendered to the British, emigration from Holland was checked, and the English became the language of the government, and the Episcopal Church was known as the English Church.

The first English sermon was preached in the Dutch Reformed Church in New York, 1764; and in 1867 the word Dutch was dropped from the title of the body, as that language is no longer used. The Amsterdam Classis, or Presbytery, not only planted and fostered this early Dutch Presbyterianism, but likewise sent over the first German Reformed ministers, as they were all of the same faith and order. The German branch has dropped the word German, and is now known as the *Reformed Church in the United States;* as the Holland branch is now known (since 1867) as the *Reformed Church in America.*

"This Church has been distinguished by a steady and united adherence to her standards and order, and, at the same time, by a kind and friendly relation to other evangelical denominations. She has enjoyed peace within her own bosom, while agitating questions have troubled and even rent other churches. Her pacific character, her freedom from the ultraisms of the day, her evangelical principles, the peculiar features of her government and order, and the attitude in which she has been found by the side of other evangelical denominations, all tend to commend her to the favorable regard of all the friends of evangelical truth, who desire 'the peace and prosperity' of the Church of Christ." (Hist., etc., by their Board, p. 23.)

The Heidelberg Catechism stands with them as the Westminster with you, and was published about eighty years previous (1563), and perhaps no symbol of the Christian Church was ever received with such universal approbation. The statements of doctrine are in some respects better than the Westminster, and the two thoroughly coincide: there is the same coincidence in bold outline in the matter of Government, it being strictly Presbyterial. The Northern Assembly has virtually overtured them, as yourselves, for a union. There is, however, supposed to be no prospect of its accomplishment, as, during the two years since its occurrence, no responsive steps have been taken. Besides, the General Synod, which answers to our General Assembly, in June last, subsequent to the meeting of the Southern Assembly, appointed a committee of eight to see what steps were practicable with reference to a closer union with *that* body.

"The following preamble and resolutions were unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, The Corresponding Delegate from the Presbyterian Church in the United States (South), expressed to this Synod the interest which his Church feels in the hope of closer relations with our own; and

WHEREAS, So formal an overture from so large and respectable a body of kindred faith and order is deserving of the most courteous attention.

Resolved, That a committee of five ministers and three elders be appointed to consider carefully the matter of the desirableness and feasibility of the proposed relations, and to report thereon, if possible, to the next General Synod.

"The following were appointed the Committee, the President being added by a vote of the Synod: Revs. H. D. Ganse, Joachim Elmendorf, B. Van Zandt, P. D. Van Cleef, Elbert S. Porter, E. T. Corwin, and the Elders, Robert H. Pruyn, Frederick T. Frelinghuysen and Frederick Hugleson." (Min. Gen. Synod, 438.)

That Committee is now pending, and I think it can be said with propriety that the movement meets a most cordial response on both sides.

According to the minues of 1872, the Presbyterian Church, South, has 912 ministers and licentiates, 1545 churches, 91,208 communicants, 11 synods and 56 presbyteries; total moneys contributed and expended in sustaining the work of the Church during the past year, $1,083,799. Of this sum, $41,004 were devoted to foreign missions, $51,899 to sustentation and domestic missions, and $47,532 to education, making a total, to these special objects, of $140,435.

The Reformed Church in America, according to the minutes of 1872, has 507 ministers, 491 churches, 65,217 communicants, 4 (particular) synods and 40 presbyteries (or classes); total moneys contributed and exepnded in sustaining the work of the Church during the past year, $684,251. Of this sum, $65,178 were devoted to foreign missions, $35,478 to domestic missions, $44,834 to education, making a total, to these special objects, of $145,485. Its total for church uses is $300,000 less than the Southern Church, but for missions and education, $5,000 more.

"The Presbyterian Church in the United States" has two theological seminaries—one is Union Seminary, in Virginia, with 52 students, the other is Columbia Seminary, at Columbia, S. C., with 50 students, making 102 theological students. Both these seminaries have considerable endowments.

"The Reformed Church in America" has also two theological seminaries, one at New Brunswick, N. J., with 22 students, and it is one of the best endowed seminaries in the world; the other is Hope College, at Holland, Michigan, which is feeble; it embraces a literary and theological course, and has 8 theological students.

In the event of a union of the three bodies, there would be occasion for considering the adjustment of various institutions, and why should not Columbia Seminary and Hope College be concentrated with your own Westminister College and thus found one of the grandest educational institutions in America within the bounds of the Synod of Missouri?—west of the Mississippi, and in the very *heart of the Missouri-Mississippy Valley.* The question of transferring Columbia Seminary to Memphis has already been discussed, and hence it is within the bounds of both reason and propriety to suggest the transfer above indicated; and three strong seminaries would be abundantly adequate to the work of the united Churches, and one seminary would lie within the bounds of each constituent of this triple union.

The Presbyterian Church, South, then, has 25,000 more members, 400 more ministers, 70 more theological students and 1000 more churches than the Reformed Church, which has three synods in the East and one in the West; that of Chicago, with 72 churches and 5 classes, or presbyteries, covering the Northwestern States.

Were the union of your Synod and these two Churches to be consummated, the united body would embrace about 2,000 Churches, 1,500 ministers, 170,000 communicants, and

1,000,000 worshipers, expending about $2,000,000 yearly for church purposes.

The Reformed Church in America is limited to the Northern States, and, naturally enough, is not disposed to allow itself to be absorbed by a much larger body on the same territory, and differing from it in some important respects, for, as to politics and "civil affairs," it simply stands as your Synod and the Southern Assembly, on the conservative and orthodox position occupied by the Old School Assembly before the war. Hence it has no prejudice against uniting with the Presbyterian Church, South, and feels that its pent up energies, which are neither few nor small, will there find an outlet through a co-operation with like-minded brethren.

It may be set down as highly probable that this union will take place between these three bodies which God, in his good providence seems to have prepared each for the other. If so, the result will be a grand old Presbyterian Church once more, as broad as the whole of the States and Territories, and free from sectionalism and latitudinarianism. It is evident that such a united and conservative body will stand in a relation to the present Northern Assembly quite analagous to that, in former days, of the Old to the New School, and there can be no doubt that a most important elective influence will go forth from it, drawing to and within itself, like a mighty magnet, those conservative members of the Northern Assembly who are not satisfied with the transformation of the standards at the hands of revolutionary agitators within the past twelve years.

The bearing on your future, as a Synod, of this most important fact of God's providence, which it seems to me you are not at liberty and will not be disposed to disregard is most interesting, but needs no enforcement from me; I merely call attention to it, that I may indulge the hope that it will be favorably and fully considered.

Neither the Southern Assembly nor the Reformed Church in America has any organization in Missouri, so that the three bodies occupy adjacent but entirely distinct territories. Surely there is a good providence in so preparing each for the others, that there need be no going nor emigrating about it, but simply a faithful recognition of the existing spiritual oneness in an organic, visible union. And the united body will be entitled to bear this grand historic title—

THE FIRST PRESBYTERIAN REFORMED CHURCH IN AMERICA.

With this view of the situation of the Synod of Missouri, (O. S.) before my mind, I would venture to suggest a scheme

of action which, it is believed, embraces the salient points to be guarded and explicitly recognized and accepted as the basis of any ecclesiastical union that may be formed. It does not contemplate any unqualified act of union with any other ecclesiastical organization whatever, but it does contemplate as early a union as may be wise and practicable with brethren who are understood to hold the same doctrines and government, and the same principles of church polity and order. Whilst an unconditional union might be considered unwise and inexpedient for various reasons, yet a conditional union, *i. e.*, a union conditioned upon an open and formal recognition of your principles, and a disavowal and repeal, if need be, of everything incompatible therewith, will probably commend itself to favorable consideration. Such is the union contemplated in this scheme:

WHEREAS, The relation of the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, commonly styled Old School, was in full rightful and legal force up to the time of the dissolution of that Assembly, Nov. 12, 1869, when its identity was lost and merged in a "Joint Convention" with the General Assembly, commonly styled New School, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; and,

WHEREAS, The Synod of Missouri (O. S.) has existed as an Independent body since 1869, not by any direct or other act of separation on its own part, nor by any constitutional or lawful proceedings on the part of that General Assembly with which it had always, previously been in connection—the actual relation being in suspense for some three years, from 1866 to 1869, like that of a wife repudiated but not divorced—arbitrarily pushed aside for no fault of hers, and denied her rights and privileges, though the relation itself still rightfully and really existed; and,

WHEREAS, The Old School of Missouri, as an Independent body, without the taint of schism upon it, has been entirely free and at liberty to choose and enter into new relations without abandoning or compromising any of its legal or ecclesiastical rights or interests by so doing; and,

WHEREAS, It appears that the Reformed (Dutch) Church of the North, and the Presbyterian Church of the South, are both thoroughly Calvinistic in doctrine and presbyterial in government; and that both are sound and conservative on the principles of Church government and policy for which this Synod has contended, and in defense of which she still maintains her position which the most solemn obligations of duty forbid her to surrender or compromise in the interest of any alliances; and,

WHEREAS, There appears to be an encouraging prospect that the Re-

formed (Dutch) Church in America, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, which was, with the Independent Synod of Missouri, a part of the undivided General Assembly (O. S.) before the war, will form an organic union as the result of the negotiations now auspiciously pending between those two bodies; and,

WHEREAS, It is believed that in the good providence of God the present appears to be a propitious time for the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) to take a definite step in contemplation of a closer union with those of like faith and principles,

Resolved, That a Committee on Union, consisting of ——— be now appointed by this Synod.

Resolved, 2, That the following statement of the position of this Synod be placed in the hands of said committee, to wit:

1. The standards which make up the constitution of the Church recognized by the Synod of Missouri (O. S.), are the Westminister Confession of Faith, the Larger and Shorter Catechisms, The Form of Government, The Discipline and Directory for Worship.

2. These standards are strictly construed in their historic and proper sense, as, e. g., they were by the undivided Presbyterian Church (O. S.), before the late war.

3. The Courts or Assemblies of the Church, including the General Assembly when there is such a body as distinguished from the Synod and lower courts, exist by the express law of the Church, and must be in subjection to the same, and are not competent at any time, or under any circumstances, to act without such authority or contrary thereto, or to attempt to supply any supposed deficiency therein, under any exigency except in the manner and way therein provided.

4. The "civil affairs" which belong to the sphere of the individual conscience and private judgment, such as systems of labor, political dogmas, and conduct respecting the nature, form, administration or change of human government, are not to be handled nor concluded by the utterances of the Church courts thereon, whether in their moral or their political bearing, but are to be left where Christ left the payment of tribute (Matt. xxii. 15–22; Mark xii. 13–17; Luke xx. 20–26), viz.: within the sphere of the individual conscience before God and of individual liberty, not to be infringed nor restrained by any authority unless that authority can be distinctly shown from the word of God as received and set forth in the standards of the Church.

5. As the General Assembly has no right nor power to act in any case, whether purely ecclesiastical or not, except in subordination and obedience to the constitution of the Church, this Synod cannot acquiesce directly or by implication in that theory of our Church government, which makes the General Assembly the final judge of its own powers in any case; and therefore this Synod cannot approve or sanction, nor wit-

tingly consent to hold or to lose any property, franchises or rights, upon any ruling of the civil courts that makes the decisions of the ecclesiastical tribunal of highest grade in any church final and binding upon them, the civil courts, in their application to the case before them, when property, rights and civil interests are drawn into question in such "case," for two reasons:—1. The civil courts have no right to abandon the exercise of the functions with which the law invests them in their jurisdiction over, and protection of, the property of the Church on the established principles of the law; and 2, for the farther reason that such a ruling, *pro tanto*, transforms the ecclesiastical into civil courts of last resort. If the decision of the Church court is final, and its constitutionality and regularity cannot be inquired into by the civil court when property rights and interests depend thereon, then it is farcical to seek redress in the civil courts. And we would respectfully submit that such a confounding of things civil and things ecclesiastical, things secular and things spiritual, is not sanctioned but forbidden with unparalleled emphasis by the separateness of Chnrch and State in this favored land. One great virtue of the principles for which the Synod of Missouri has contended, is found in their preservation of the kingdom of Christ from entanglements with the things of this world and in securing to the citizens of that kingdom, the members of the Church, a status and treatment solely as the subjects of his laws revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

6. This Synod cannot surrender the constitutional right that it has exercised, to interpose its authority to stay the operation within its bounds of any deliverance of the General Assembly when deemed by the Synod of questionable constitutionality, until the ruling shall be sent down to the presbyteries as provided. (F. G. xii. 6.) The Presbyterian church is not governed by the decisions of the Assembly as arbitrary canons of ultimate authority, but solely by and as the standards of the Church provide.

Resolved, 3, That the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) is prepared and willing, *Deo volente*, to unite *ex animo*, with any portion of the visible Church of Christ upon the basis above indicated.

Resolved, 4, That the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) finds in the record of the General Assembly, North, sufficient reason to withhold, for the present, any offer of union with that body, and also, good cause to decline any overtures of union from it, as, we regret to say, we do not see how an organic union with it could now be effected on "conditions mutually acceptable." The hope of ultimate union by virtue of that body returning to the true theory of its standards, is still cherished, and whilst we heartily reciprocate all Christian and brotherly courtesies, we pray that God will bless our conscientious and dutiful testimony against their errors to the hastening of their recovery.

Resolved, 5, That we congratulate our brethren of the Reformed Dutch

Church, and of the Presbyterian Church, South, on their pending negotiations for union, the Lord having apparently prepared and preserved the one for the other, to the greater glory of his own great name; and it is our prayer that He may not give them "the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

And as the negotiations now pending between those two bodies necessarialy involve every point in which the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) could feel an interest; and believing that the voice of this Synod would be more highly respected and influencial in the bringing of these negotiations to a favorable issue by the steps following than by any direct intervention in the same—

Resolved, 6, That a delegate be appointed to visit and be authorized and directed to lay the foregoing statement of the position and principles of the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) before the next General Synod of the Refromed (Dutch) Church in America, to meet in the Second Reformed Church, New Brunswick, New Jersey, the first Wednesday (6th) of June, 1873, for the information and consideration of the same.

Resolved, 7, That the above-named committee on union be authorized and directed to visit the General Assembly to meet in the Presbyterian church of Little Rock, Arkansas, on the third Thursday in May, 1873, and lay before that body the above named statement of the position and principles of the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) and the resolutions accompanying the same.

Resolved, 8, That the Committee on Union shall not act as provided in resolution 7, unless a majority of the Presbyteries of this Synod shall first have approved of this plan of procedure; the chairman of said committee to receive his information from the stated clerk of Synod, to whom the several spring Presbyteries are hereby directed to send immediate information of their action approving or disapproving the step contemplated in resolution 7.

Resolved, 9, That in the event that the said General Assembly, to meet at Little Rock, shall adopt and agree to said statement expressed under resolution 2; and in the farther event that the said statement shall be transmitted to the Presbyteries of the said General Assembly and receive the approval of a majority of the same, then and upon the concurrence of these conditions and events, and not otherwise, the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) shall be, and shall be deemed and treated, and shall consider herself, and so act, as in organic relation with the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and fully entitled to all the rights and privileges, and bound by all the duties arising from such ecclesiastical relation under the Westminster standards of the Presbyterian Church; *provided*, however, that nothing in this act, or in anything done in pursuance thereof, invalidate any property or chartered right, franchise or privilege of the Synod of Missouri (O. S.)

Resolved, 10, That the Presbyteries of this Synod are recommended to appoint commissioners to the General Assembly, to meet in Little Rock, 1873, who, in the event of the above-named basis of union being adopted by the said General Assembly, may sit as corresponding or enrolled members thereof, but the provision, for the submission of this paper to the Presbyteries of the said Assembly, and their approval of the same, shall remain of full force and effect.

Resolved, 11, Finally, that the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) as a Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, acting upon the great commission to go into the world and to preach the Gospel to every creature, knows no north and no south, no east and no west, but recognizes the truth, in all its breadth and universality, that "the field is the world," and that in the matter of visible union the Synod is influenced wholly and only by motives growing out of an unbiased devotion to the Head of that kingdom which is not of this world.

There is importance attaching to an adherence to the record in an explicit avowal of the constitutional relation of your Synod to its General Assembly up to the time of its dissolution in 1869, as it fortifies the position of the Synod with respect to any legal issues; and the same is true of its entire independence and freedom in the choice of new relations since that event.

The red tape that may appear in the reference to Presbyteries of any act of organic union will be seen to be in the right place and indispensable, when it is remembered that such a union as is contemplated should have a constitutional and organic force, and hence it should not rest on a bare resolution of the Assembly or the Synod, but receive the solemn sanctions of a reference to the Presbyteries, as the book provides for constitutional rules, and as has been wisely done in other cases of union. After such a reference and action, no question could so much as be insinuated as to the unanimity of the uniting bodies or the validity and force of the uniting act.

And now I am done, and should perhaps, apologize for having extended this communication so much beyond what was contemplated, or, perhaps, for having made it at all. But I have not written because I supposed you ignorant of these things, for I know there are those of your number who have a personal acquaintance with and experience of them, which I have not; but, rather, I write as one looking on in quiet and from a distance, to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance, and, if possible, to cast a ray of light, feeble though it may be, yet a certain ray of light on the path which I feel persuaded that my brethren of the Synod may safely take. I

somewhat regret that I did not take up my pen at an earlier date; but that I have been induced to do so at all is rather my own surprise, after having taken no active part, either in the Church courts or out of them, in these momentous public discussions, during the past ten years, notwithstanding the intense interest I have all the while felt in them. I now give utterance to these views with no other thought than that of subserving the cause of truth and righteousness in holding together and strengthening all the congregations of a church that I love and a Synod that I once faithfully and laboriously served, officially, for eight years, and have deeply sympathized with in all her troubles.

May the Good Shepherd lead his flock in green pastures and beside still waters.

Your brother in Christ, S. S. LAWS.

The foregoing communication, allowing for a few changes mainly referring to the meeting of Synod as past instead of future, was written just before the meeting of the Synod of Missouri (O. S.), with the view of laying it before that body in a printed form. It was, however, withheld, and the Synod happily arrived at a wise and prudent conclusion with wonderful unanimity and cordiality, without debate. The subject, however, was thoroughly canvassed, and generally well understood. Indeed, the course of action was, in general, too plain and obvious to need argument. It was, in view of the recognized state of facts, agreed on spontaneously. As is obvious upon the reading of it, and especially in the light of the discussion that precedes it, the scheme of action above submitted contemplated the same end—viz., the union of the three bodies or churches, and substantially the course of action so harmoniously agreed on; so that I cannot but rejoice in it with you most heartily, feeling fully assured that its transparent naturalness, candor, simplicity, and wisdom, under the guidance of the Spirit of all grace, will commend it to the hearty approval, not only of your own people, but of the Christian world. It would, perhaps, have been a valuable help had the Synod placed in the hands of the Committee a statement of its position, as is suggested under the second resolution.

Although the Synod has taken action, yet, in the pending state of its affairs, it has been thought that the contents of this letter may still be of some service.

I will now give the action of the Synod. It is taken from the *Old School Presbyterian*, Oct. 18, 1872:

"As to the Synod's future—a question which has excited so much discussion, and in regard to which painful solicitude was felt in every part of our Church—it was settled, without a word of debate, not only harmoniously, but UNANIMOUSLY. We do not doubt that the action of the Synod will be received with entire satisfaction by our people, and that future developments will prove it to be eminently judicious.

The following paper, setting forth that action, we insert here, so that our readers may have it at the earliest moment:

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ECCLESIASTICAL RELATIONS.

Rev. A. P. Forman, chairman of the Committee on Ecclesiastical Relations, made the following report:

"Your Committee, to whom was referred the statement of the votes of the several Presbyteries on the overture of the Synod, and the whole subject of our ecclesiastical relations, beg leave to report, that

"WHEREAS, There is a strong probability that a union at no distant day will be consummated between the Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States, constituting together a strong, conservative, thoroughly orthodox, and truly national Presbyterian Church, and with which our Synod may unite without the loss of any of its churches, ministers, or members; therefore,

"*Resolved*, 1st. That this Synod does hereby express its deep interest in the proposed union of the Reformed Church in America and the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and our anxiety that it may soon be consummated, and our willingness to co-operate therein and be united with them.

"*Resolved*, 2dly. That this Synod appoint a committee of — ministers and — elders to meet with similar committees that may be appointed by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and the Reformed Church in America, to confer together with them in reference to the desirableness and practicability of the union of the three Churches, and if the way be clear, to take all the necessary steps preparatory to such union, and to report the result of their conference or conferences to this Synod at its next regular meeting.

"*Resolved*, 3dly. That in anticipation of the consummation of the union between the three bodies above named, to which Synod now sees no serious obstacles, it will not be considered premature in any of our Presbyteries, who may choose to do so, to send commissioners to the General Assembly of the United Church, who shall take their seats in that body when the union is accomplished.

"[Signed] A. P. FORMAN, Chairman.
"L. P. BOWEN,
"W. W. TRIMBLE,
"A. MUNSON,
"J. M. CHANEY,
"DAVID COULTER,
"WM. CHRISMAN.

"The report was unanimously adopted, after which Synod united with Dr. Brank in thankful acknowledgment to Almighty God for his goodness in bringing the Synod harmoniously to a conclusion with reference to this matter.

"The blanks in the report were filled with three ministers and two ruling elders, and the following brethren were unanimously chosen for that purpose:

"*Principals*—Ministers John L. Yantis, John Montgomery, and R. P. Farris, and Elders Logan Hunton and D. H. Bishop. *Alternates*—Ministers A. P. Forman, R. G. Brank, Edward Martin, and Elders Edward Bredell and Dr. W. M. McPheeters."

Whether the triple union be consummated, as is confidently anticipated, or not, the fact that the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) has moved with equal step toward two accordant bodies, one wholly in the North and the other wholly in the South, forever silences all imputations of partizan feeling and sectionalism as attaching to the providential result of this wisely-instituted negotiation.

The Synod also took the following action in response to the Committee of the Detroit Assembly, whose appointment to "visit" the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) is explained above:

THE COMMITTEE ON ECCLESIASTICAL RELATIONS

Made a report with reference to the address of Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D., delegate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States *of America*. It was adopted, and is as follows:

"The Committee on Ecclesiastical Relations would report the following minute for adoption by the Synod:

"Synod does hereby express its great gratification at the earnest and eloquent remarks of Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D., delegate to this body from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church in the United States of America, bringing with him the Christian salutations of that body, the expressions of their deep, heartfelt sympathy, and their desire to be brought upon grounds of closer union on conditions mutually acceptable.

"Dr. Dickson having furthermore earnestly requested the appointment of a committee to confer with the committee appointed by the Assembly at its last meeting, and having invited us to make a statement of our grievances, and of the causes which have led us into our present position, with the hope that at least the obstacles to a more fraternal correspondence and co-operation, if not of organic union, may all be removed, Synod with pleasure accedes to this request; for, although we were formerly denied a hearing at the bar of the General Assembly of the Old School Presbyterian Church, with which we were then in legitimate connection, yet, with the hope that the glory of God may be promoted

and the cause of our blessed Master advanced, Synod hereby appoints Rev. James H. Brookes, Rev. R. P. Farris, and Mr. D. H. Bishop a committee of conference, and enjoins upon the committee to state with all candor, though in Christian love, our wrongs and grievances, and the causes which have led to our present position, and the obsticles to our union with the Presbyterian Church in United States of America, and to report the result of the conference to the next meeting of Synod."—*Old School Presbyterian, October* 18, 1872.

The "visit" of Dr. Dickson accomplished all that the body sending him could have reasonably expected or asked. Certainly he acquitted himself with signal address and courtesy, and his Christian spirit and greeting were appreciated and reciprocated with a cordiality, manliness and candor that must have commanded his own admiration. The appointment of a committee, as requested and urged by him, affords the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) a desirable opportunity of laying her case before the Christian, and especially the Presbyterian world. The passions of the war have now greatly subsided, and there is good hope that the truth, thus brought face to face with error, will vindicate successfully its superior claims. It is perhaps, also a favorable circumstance that the course of the late Assembly at Detroit has already arrested attention, and elicited discussion. The future may be thus forecast: If the principles involved in the position of the Synod of Missouri be allowed a fair hearing, they will hold the attention of that body until a working majority comes back to them and reasserts them; *or* they will act as an entering wedge and divide the conservative from the radical and revolutionary element, so as to facilitate their attraction, by the mighty power of a sanctified elective affinity, into union with the old-fashioned Church, which will, under God, result from the triple union now so auspiciously pending.

It has been the main purpose of this letter to set forth the underlying principles of the issues still resting on the Presbyterian Churches and causing division. These principles are as palpable and real to the mind of any ecclesiastical lawyer, or of any intelligent Christian, as the tools in the hands of a mechanic, or the pen in the fingers of him who writes with it. They are not remote and intangible abstractions, but as the original word, *principium*, implies, fountains and sources of action. Not life itself is more real; and, when held to view, the poorest intellect has a lively appreciation of their power and value. In his admirable work on contracts, Mr. Parsons explains how the law seeks to accomplish its aims "by means

of *principles*—that is, by means of *truths, ascertained, defined* and *so expressed as to be practical and operative.*" *Principles,* then, as it is here capitally expressed, are not barren abstractions, nor dreamy and vague impressions, but the stuff that real life is made of—*they are practical and operative truths, so ascertained and defined as to take hold of and assert their influence over the mind and the life.* To ascertain, therefore, whether men really accept given principles of action, it is simply necessary to look into their lives. "Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them." Mat. vii. 20. This is the simple and everlasting test by means of which to distinguish between what men are really and what they profess. It is no unusual thing in these days to hear men say that they agree with the principles of the Declaration and Testimony, but differ from the signers of that paper in the application of them—*i. e.*, the principles are all right, provided you don't act on them, or provided you so act on them that those who hold and act on opposite principles will not find you in their way. The fact is, there is a sort of law of impenetrability which obtains in the moral world by which two opposite principles are exclusive of each other, and cannot occupy and control the same man at the same time: hence collisions, antagonisms and strife. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon. Has it ever been shown in what respect the principles of the Declaration and Testimony were misapplied? Has it ever been shown that any one of those principles is expressed in equivocal or evasive language, so as to mislead any simple minded, honest inquirer as to the truth meant to be enunciated? Has it ever been shown that there is any language in our English vocabulary, or in any other, in which they could have been clothed at the time, and under the circumstances of their utterance, that could have rendered them more "practical and operative"? Were the signers of that instrument denounced as slanderers and schismatics as a matter of *principle* or simply as a matter of *taste?* Was it a question as to the mere style and words in which accepted principles were expressed, or as to the truth of those principles? If men are honest in the declaration that they accept the principles of the Declaration and Testimony, then let them show it by acting in such a way as to square their conduct by those principles. Let them call on the united Assembly to purge itself of all complicity with the errors in doctrine and practice therein most signally reprobated. Moreover, let them exert themselves to do justice to the men who have been wronged and outraged because of a simple and faithful adhesion to those principles, when it cost something to

avow them. Let all property and advantages acquired by the opposite course be disgorged. Let every effort be made to repair the damage done the Church by the violent attempt made to overthrow the Declaration and Testimony itself, and to crush and overwhelm with degradation and disgrace all who stood on it. Anything short of conduct which will harmonise such professions with the truths involved, must leave those professions as empty pretentions, meant or calculated to deceive and mislead. "Then Saul (who is called Paul) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, and said: 'O full of all subtility, and all mischief, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to prevent the right ways of the Lord?'" Acts xiii. 9–10. This is very severe language, and yet Elymas, against whom it was employed, was not guilty of hypocrisy or inconsistency, but assumed an attitude of *open* opposition to the truth, by a resort to deceptive arts and practices. The crown of hypocrisy had already been appropriated by Judas, the suicide.

It is a good point gained when it can be seen and shown plainly that men who differ do so on principle. When that is seen to be the case each can recognize the other as honest in his divergent conduct. Whereas, if both agree theoretically, their opposite courses of action necessarily must, and always do, call down crimination and recrimination; charges of inconsistency and dishonesty, of deceit and double dealing, and the worst passions and the bitterest epithets are provoked. Not so when there is an acknowledged difference of principle. Moreover, the first and most substantial step towards differing parties living in intelligent harmony, or towards furthering suitable measures for sincere and cordial union, is not to slur over or to disingenuously ignore real differences, but to ascertain wherein they rest on principle, or may be the result of misconception and misunderstanding. If men agree in principle sincerely and truly, a fair comparison of views should bring them together; but if they differ in principle, still, such comparison of views gives good promise of dissolving all false issues and of bringing out clearly to view the precise points of difference, and of guarding against misconception and consequent misrepresentation. As principles are not barren abstractions, but practical and operative truths, it necessarily implies either inconsistency or deceit for men who pursue opposite courses of conduct to pretend that they agree in their principles, and only differ in their application of them, as it is the application of a principle that gives it all its value, force and character. When men differ in principle—*i. e.*,

differ in what they accept as practical and operative truth, one receiving and acting on one thing as truth, and the other receiving and acting on its opposite as truth—the one extemporising Church government according to the reasonable suggestions of circumstances, and making ecclesiastical decisions final and binding where even vested civil rights are dependent thereon; the other, repudiating this, and administering church government as a matter of express law, enacted by the Head of the Church, and regarding no ecclesiastical decision as binding unless strictly constitutional—*both* sides cannot be right. One or the other must be in error. And yet if neither can be brought to see its error, although *union* is impracticable, nevertheless both may, in good temper and freedom from bitterness, arrogance and dogmatism, live beside each other as good neighbors, each being answerable to the Master.

It is conceived that the difference between the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) and the Assembly, North, is one of principle involving, in general, the grand issues of *ecclesiology* or the nature of the Church, and specifically our constitutional Presbyterianism. There is something deeper and broader at stake than the *specific issues* of the Declaration and Testimony, even the veritable foundation principles of our ecclesiasticism under the practical operation of which such issues must be viewed and dealt with in times of peace as well as of war. Scientific investigators often receive some of their most valuable hints from their acknowledged mistakes; and there is equal reason why, and most happy would it be for the Church, should it candidly acknowledge mistakes and improve by them. The Church is not infallible, nor are Church courts. That prerogative belongs alone to the Head of the Church. Hence it is properly said in our standards: "All Synods or councils since the Apostles' times, whether general or particular, may err, and many have erred; therefore they are not to be made the rule of faith or practice, but to be used as a help to both." (C. F. xxxi. 3.) Pride of self-consistency is the most lamentable weakness that any Church court or Assembly ever rendered conspicuous upon its records. But consistency with the truth itself is indeed a jewel.

The Presbyterian i. e., The Westminster Standards set forth a theory of the Church, its nature, its functions and relations. Have the Declaration and Testimony strict Constructionists the right theory of those standards, or have the Latitudinarians? Has the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) the correct principles of interpretation and ecclesiastical action, or has the Assembly, North? These are fair questions, and their decision should

heal the divisions of the Presbyterian family, and bring them all together as co-workers in the vindication of the claims of a truly spiritual commonwealth and in the conciliation of Christendom thereto. The manifold power of our glorious religion in subduing to our Saviour the kingdoms of this world might then be conspicuously multiplied beyond what tongue can tell.

L.

NOTE.—The reference, "M. E. Chs.," is to the article of April *Southern Review*, in book form; "D. P." is to Distinctive Principles, a publication of the Presbyterian Board of Publication at Richmond, Va.

APPENDIX.

Correspondence between "The Presbyterian Church in the United States" and "The Reformed Church in America," and "The Synod of Missouri, (O. S.)"

I.

DR. TODD'S ADDRESS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

We publish below a report of the remarks made by the Rev J. A. Todd, D. D., to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church South, at Huntsville, Alabama, on Saturday, May 20th, 1871, on presenting the overture of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America for the opening of a fraternal correspondence:

Mr Moderator and Brethren of the General Assembly:—It is to me a matter of regret that I should break in upon the important and interesting discussion now in progress. I hope, however, to occupy but little of your time.

Will you pardon me, if, before I proceed to the subject which I am charged especially to present, I indulge in a little personal reminiscence having connection with the Presbyterian Church in the South? In the year 1858, after having spent some weeks in Cuba, where was no opportunity to engage in the public worship of God, according to our Protestant evangelical idea, and where I had not met with a single familiar face of man, woman, or child, or any other I had ever seen before, I returned to my native country, and on a bright and beautiful Sabbath morning in Spring landed on the wharf in Charleston. After finding a resting place at the hotel, and refreshing the physical man with food convenient for it, I started out alone to look for a Protestant Church, where I might once more unite with Christians in praise and prayer, and listen to the sound of the glorious old gospel. In the good providence of God I found my way to the Presbyterian church, of which I afterwards learned the Rev. Dr. Dana was pastor. I entered, a perfect stranger, and sat down with the congregation to join in their worship. Presently the services began. The minister arose and gave out that sweet hymn, that seemed to have been designed especially for me:

"Welcome, sweet day of rest,
That saw the Lord arise;
Welcome to this reviving breast,
And these rejoicing eyes."

Well, sir, my eyes did rejoice, and my heart too. That hymn touched a chord that responded. Or, like the old prophet's rod, it unsealed the fountain. For some minutes I could not see the minister; at least not distinctly. There was a mist before my eyes, for they were swimming in grateful tears. It was so good to be there, in the house of God, with Christian people, that I felt as if it would be a relief to my feelings if I could just get up and take the whole congregation into my arms, minister and all, and give them one good hearty hug.

What was the explanation of that peculiar experience? It was that the heart cries out for fellowship in the worship and service of God. We are social beings—social in our religion, as well as in almost everything else. We must have somebody to love, and to love us. And however restless and unsatisfied we may

have been while wandering in solitude or isolation over the world, as soon as we come into communion with those whose faith in Christ, and whose hopes and sympathies are one with ours, our hearts begin to be content and happy. I have often thought of that incident. It illustrates a truth which I am anxious to express. It is this—God meant that we should love one another. Love, sir, is from God. Hate is from the devil. The one comes down from heaven. The other comes up from the dark world below. Love is happiness. Hate is misery. He who loves most enjoys most.

Your preacher last night, the Rev. Dr. Wills, to whom we all listened with so much pleasure, told us the same truths. He said that religion not only did not forbid, but it encouraged us to love God, and to love each other, with all our might; and he compared the influence of love upon society to the overflow of the Nile, bearing fertility to its farthest wave. He might have added that the reflex influence of love upon the individual soul from which it emanates is equally beneficent and ennobling; its overflow enriches like the Nile. And wherever it goes out from the soul, and returns to it, there in that soul is a phenomenon like that of old Egypt where the springing flowers and verdure seemed to chase back the receding waters to their channel. Yes, sir, it is so, and it is just what we might expect when we remember the divine declaration that "Love is of God, and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God."

There is a story, Mr. Moderator, which I have understood is sometimes told good-naturedly among the ministry of our Church, and with which you are said to have had some connection, which I should like to repeat here and then add a little to it. The story is that the Rev. Dr. Plumer, in allusion to a national Dutch habit, once made the remark that the ministers of the Reformed Dutch Church were in one respect at least like Moses, they received their theology in the clouds—of smoke.

REV. DR. PLUMER.—Never said it. (Laughter.) (Sorry we can't give the expression and tone of the Moderator. 'Tis beyond the power of type.—*Reporter.*)

REV. DR. TODD.—Very well sir, I was just going to add, that whether you said it or not we had brought you something this time that came from a source beyond the clouds—the Christian sympathy and love of a whole Church whose faith and labors are kindred with your own. A sympathy and love that came down as I believe from the Giver of every good and every perfect gift—from Him of whose nature an apostle has given the sublime designation—"GOD IS LOVE."

It will the better explain the reason why a Commissioner from the Reformed Church in America is present in this Assembly, if you will permit me to read a brief abstract from the minutes of the General Synod's proceedings at Newark, New-Jersey, in June of last year. The record is in these words:

In view of the fact that our Church is now extending its operations in the Southern States, which open so wide a field for evangelical labor, your committee are impressed with the propriety of inaugurating a fraternal corrrspondence by delegates with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. As the churches in connection with this Synod, which may there be organized, must necessarily exist in close proximity and intimate relations with those in connection with that General Assembly, it seems eminently desirable that the two denominations, holding a common faith and laboring side by side for a common result, should cultivate a spirit of Christian sympathy and brotherly love. Your committee, therefore, recommended the adoption of the following resolution:

Resolved, That a delegate be appointed by this General Synod to attend the next meeting of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, and to bear to that reverend body the cordial salutation of this Synod, together with the expression of its desire to enter into a fraternal corespondence. [Minutes Reformed Church General Synod, [1870, pp. 51–52.]

This, you will perceive, formed part of the report of the Committee on Correspondence. After an unusually full and free interchange of opinion on the subject, the report was adopted with very great, and it might be said, with almost

entire unanimity by the Synod. It was then my desire that an excellent brother already well known to you—the Rev. Dr. Van Zandt, formerly of Petersburgh, Virginia—should be sent upon this mission of Christian love. Not that I did not prize the privilege, but because there were several reasons why it seemed more expedient for him to represent the Church. The desire was not gratified, and consequently I have the pleasure to bear to you to-day, Mr. Moderator and brethren of the General Assembly, the Christian salutations of the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, and in their behalf we wish you grace, mercy, and peace.

You have another name, but not another faith. You live under a different sky, but you and we are equally near to the common heaven of our hopes, and the same glorious Master, Jesus Christ, whom we both love and honor, is equally near to both. "One Lord, one faith, and one baptism," is yours and ours. The banners that wave over our separate hosts as they move on to act their part in the great struggle with the powers of darkness, have but one motto; that truth which is the power of God and the wisdom of God to salvation—"Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

Coming to you in this faith and spirit, I do not see, Mr. Moderator, there should be any obstacle to the fraternal intercourse we invite. I am not unmindful of the fact that since the beginning of the last decade a great political convulsion has shaken this nation to its centre. I do not forget that the storm of war has darkened your sky and ours, that blood has been shed, and that so many from the North and the South have been laid in untimely graves. All this I remember. But whatever may have been our different convictions on other points, there is one thing in which we shall all agree. It is in the feeling of deep regret that so many homes have been made desolate, and so many hearts almost broken with bereavement and sorrow. All that we can do now is to "let the dead past bury its dead." We do not propose, therefore, to make any admissions to you. We do not propose that you shall make any admissions to us. We do propose to meet you as Christian men should meet Christian men, on the broad platform of Christian charity and love, to hold out to you the right hand of Christian fellowship with our hearts in it, and to invoke the cultivation of a natural sympathy for each other while prosecuting the work which a common Master has committed to our hands. On this basis it does seem that we can and ought to unite.

Not, however, in an organic union, for that is not the point to which the action of our Synod refers. You cling to your individuality, and we cling to ours. We cling to it so tenaciously that there is no present disposition or prospect that we shall lose it by being merged into any other body. It is best probably, all things considered, that churches, like regiments in an army, or individual men, should not lose their identity in a general mass. Each one has its characteristic genius and mode of action, so that left to itself it may render a more efficient service. But this need not prevent us from cherishing an affectionate interest in each other's welfare, or speaking a word to cheer each other's hearts. Like ships at sea, we can hail each other as we go on our ways, and say "God-speed to you, brother!" as we pass by. It brings back a remark that was made by a gentleman on the steamer the other day, while going from New York to Charleston. Looking out over the ocean, and seeing a sail passing here, and a steamer there, at different points of the horizon, he turned to me and said, "Why, it is not so lonesome out here on the water as I thought. It seems to be company for us to have a ship in sight." So it is with Christian churches and Christian hearts. The sight of each other, and a friendly hail, often does them a world of good.

So it should be, especially with you and us. For we too are Presbyterian, and if you will excuse me, Mr. Moderator, a little more so than yourselves. What we are now we shall probably remain.

No one, of course, can tell what may be in the future. There is a secular philosophy quite prevalent just now that says some strange things about the transmutation of one species into another, and if it should strike through into the

department of the spiritual and religious, there is no knowing in what shape you or we hereafter turn up. Mr. Darwin has told us in the first edition of his book on the Origin of Species, that Mr. Hearne saw a black bear, on the coast of North America, swimming about in the water with his mouth open and catching at flies like a whale. And he added, that if the supply of insects were sufficiently abundant, and the competition not too great, we could see no difficulty in a race of bears becoming more and more aquatic in their structure and habits, with larger and larger mouths, till a creature was produced as monstrous as a whale. We should learn from this, perhaps, not to speak too positively of the transformations we may ourselves undergo.

But whatever the future may have in store, the union we are seeking now is in our view more important than organic union. It is a union of true brotherly sympathy, love, and co-operation; one whose nature has been well expressed in the language of Augustine—"In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity."

Having borne to you this message from the Church that sent me, I pledge you in its behalf, with Dutch faith and Dutch bottom, to stand up with you, side by side, for the doctrines and precepts of that glorious old book that has "God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth without any mixture of error, for its matter." This Bible and the Divine Redeemer it reveals are the gifts of God's wonderful love. And, brethren, "If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." Let us do it. So shall our Saviour's prayer be answered. So shall his kingdom of purity and peace at length be bounded only by the circuit of the globe. And then the anticipation of one of our own poets in regard to the Church of Christ, shall be a realized hope.

"So shall her holy bounds increase,
With walls of praise, and gates of peace,
So shall the Vine which martyr tears
And blood sustained in other years,
With fresher life be clothed upon;
And to the world in beauty show,
Like the rose plant of Jericho,
And glorious as Lebanon."

Mr. Moderator and brethren. in the name of the General Synod and the Church it represents, I bid you God-speed in your work, and again invoke upon you, now and always, the blessing of the Almighty—grace, and mercy, and peace.

The following will give some idea of the Moderator's reply though we regret that the report is so meagre and imperfect.

DR. PLUMER'S REPLY.

It is my pleasant duty to return the kind sentiments you have just expressed. In the words of one of the fathers, "I would not give one hour of love for a whole eternity of contention." If I had it here, I would read to you, sir, John Wickliffe's translation of the 13th chapter of first Corinthians, in answer to the first part of your address. You are no stranger to us, for we cannot forget that you are the descendants of the old Church of Holland. We know your history, and our theological students read your authors. We remember, too, that in the land of your fathers met the world-renowned Synod of Dort, that adopted the Heidelberg Catechism, and framed that exposition of gospel truth which is connection with the Westminster Confession, has stood as a barrier against heterodoxy to this day.

Within our borders there is a nest of people who are closely allied to you, and would probably find a congenial home in your Church. Come and preach to this nucleus in North Carolina and Alabama. We bid you welcome, and always shall, while you preach as you have said, salvation by faith in Jesus Christ and Him crucified, and that "faith without works is dead."

You cannot have come here, sir, without seeing some of the spots where Northern and Southern men have met in bloody contest. Your remarks on that

subject have greatly affected our hearts. But all language falls short of the dreadful reality. It is true you have felt some of the evils of war in the North as well as we. But to estimate them properly it is necessary to feel them as our people have felt them here. I remember staying on one occasion during the war with a gentleman of Dutch name and extraction in New Jersey. Having ridden out for his health, he came in and reported seventy-two families in one neighborhood that had been thrown into mourning by the war. I can repeat the sentiment of Robert Hall, and feel its truth as I repeat it, that "war is the obliteration of all the virtues."

It will doubtless be the wish of this body to respond more formally to your resolution and address. Our hearts turn to you with kindly sentiments. Some of us have no better friends than your Taylors and DeWitts. We honor you for your firm adherence to sound doctrine. And we bid you welcome to our Assembly.

REPORT OF THE REV. J. H. BRYSON,

The Assembly (1872) then took up the order of the day—to hear the report of the Commissioner to the Reformed Church and to receive Dr. Van Zandt.

Rev. J. H. Bryson presented the following:

To the Moderator of the General Assembly to meet at Richmond, Va., on May 16th, 1872:

In accordance with the appointment of the last General Assembly at its sessions in Huntsville, Ala., I attended the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America, which met in the city of Albany, New York, on June the 7th, 1871.

It affords me much pleasure to report that I was received by that body with the greatest cordiality and Christian friendship, as the first delegate from the General Assembly of our Church. My reception was an occasion of intense interest, as I was to respond to their friendly overtures. And when I stood up before that venerable Synod to assure them, that our General Assembly most cordially accepted their kind propositions touching a fraternal correspondence, and that I was commissioned to bear to them the warm salutations and Christian sympathies of our Church, every heart seemed to overflow with rejoicing at the happy issue of the matter they had ventured to propose. Again and again did I receive the warmest congratulations, touching the fraternal alliance that was now so favorably established between the two bodies. Nothing was wanting to make my mission everything I could wish for the beloved Church I was honored to represent; and I can not too strongly express the earnest and warm cordiality that characterized my reception by that noble Christian people.

The Synod heard with pleasure and profound interest all that I communicated touching our beloved Zion, her doctrines, her history, her trials, and the good work she was endeavoring to accomplish for the cause of our common Lord and King. They expressed their earnest gratification at the wonderful success that had attended all our operations, and assured us that they would ever feel a deep interest in all that pertained to our future welfare and prosperity.

On taking my leave, I was charged to bear back to the beloved Church I represented their warmest salutations and Christian sympathies, and I was instructed to give the assurance that they were ready, through the fraternal alliance now so favorably established, to co-operate with us in every suitable way to advance the interests of the glorious kingdom of our common Lord and Master.

During the sessions of the General Synod, the Rev. Dr. Van Zandt was appointed to attend the next session of our General Assembly, to be held in the city of Richmond, Va., on the 16th of May, 1872.

Very respectfully, J. H. BRYSON.

Mr. Bryson— I will say in addition that my reception was everything that I could wish for myself and for the Assembly. They gladly hailed the hour that brought the two bodies together in the great work of the Master. It was of course with some hesitation that they ventured to enter upon this correspondence, but when the Huntsville Assembly responded so cordially and so generously, no language that I can use could give you any conception of the warmth and cordiality with which that noble Christian people received me as your commissioner. They hail it as the opening of a happy future to both Churches—a future of usefulness and honor to the Master's cause.

II.

ADDRESS OF REV. DR. VAN ZANDT.

Rev. Dr. Van Zandt was introduced, and said:

Moderator: As the delegate of the "Reformed Church in America," I could desire no more favorable introduction to this Assembly than the report of your delegate to our General Synod, which has just been read. You have learned from that with what gratification our church received your worthy representative and reciprocated his expressions of fraternal kindness and confidence. His appearance among us was hailed as the formal acceptance, on your part, of the overtures of correspondence which we had ventured to propose, and I am here to-day to strengthen the bonds of our unity, and, if possible, to draw it a little closer.

But I appear before you under circumstances which are somewhat peculiar, and if one who has so few claims to personal consideration may yet be regarded as representing his Church, my presence here is itself the evidence that the line of separation between us is not an impassable barrier. When I look around upon the familiar faces, and my heart responds to the fraternal greetings which meet me everywhere, I scarcely know whether I am at home or abroad. The immediate past seems like a dream of yesternight, and I am again one of yourselves, in the grand old Synod of Virginia. But as a son, after long years of absence, returns to his home, and is reminded by the marked consideration and kindness of his reception that he is now a welcome and honored guest, where as a rollicking boy he had enjoyed the freedom of one of the family, so I am recalled by the grateful, and yet embarrassing attentions which I have received on every hand, to my official character as the representative of another branch of His household "by whom the whole family in Heaven and on earth are named."

I am reminded by the terms of my commission that it is not to indulge in personal reminiscences that I am here; and yet it would be expecting too much to imagine, that in this place and presence I could be wholly oblivious to the past, or could so repress its crowding memories, as to avoid all allusions to the living and the dead. The scenes through which I have passed, and am passing now, call up before me the men with whom it was my privilege and joy to mingle here, in the amenities of social life and the responsibilities of the ministerial office. McPheeters, the gentle, lovable, heroic martyr; Moore, of the learned and eloquent pen and silvery tongue, among those from the gallant little presbytery of East Hanover, who have gone up higher; Foote, the historian, whose facile pen loved to trace the daring and devotion of those earlier worthies of kindred faith and feeling; Armistead, whose muscular frame and massive mind gave expression and emphasis to his ponderous thoughts; Greene, of the eagle-eye and open heart, whose burning words yet failed to overtake the lightning thought of his electric mind; these and others from the Synod of Virginia, now in the General Assembly and Church of the first born in Heaven; these and others equally true and great and good, who yet remain, were my brethren as well as yours. They are my brethren still, and palsied be this tongue when for any cause, short of apostacy from God, it shall refuse to own the kindred or to bless the tie.

Sir, we are no strangers, and though I come to you from a foreign body,

yet we are *one* in Christ our Head, and I am here to say that we are not your antagonists, your rivals, or your judges, but your brethren in Christ, who desire to exemplify in our relations with you that highest type of Christian union possible to our present condition and circumstances "the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace."

Sir, you know, as well as I, that there are certain cycles of religious thought, which though they have not the fixed periodicity, yet as certainly bring round sooner or later particular phases of popular opinion and feeling, as the revolution of the heavenly bodies bring around the alternations of heat and cold, summer and winter. Some one truth, or half-truth, seizes upon the public mind, and is magnified until it fills the whole field of vision, to the obscuration of every other truth, until, in turn, it gives place to another exaggeration. Hence, the recurrence of what may be styled religious epidemics, more or less wide-spread and virulent, but happily, not of long duration. The epidemic, now prevalent in many quarters, springing out of the exaggeration of a false conception of Christian union, is the desire for an indiscriminate fusion of all evangelical churches in one grand conglomeration. The "seamless robe of Christ" is made a cover for all sorts of error of those who yet claim to hold the Head. And his prayer that his people "may all be one," which will certainly be fulfilled because it is His—is expected to find its accomplishment in the external organic union of the most discordant elements. Ignoring that inspired challenge to the common sense of mankind, "how can two walk together except they be agreed," the nominal union of those of every shade and complexion of opinion and practice, is counted the grand desideratum which is to introduce the milleunial glories of the Church. Hence that spurious catholicity which "rejoiceth not in the truth," but would eliminate all that is distinctive in doctrine or practice for the empty sound of union and the aggregation of numbers.

It is not from any sympathy with that boastful liberality, which is illiberal only to those who are true to their convictions; it is not from any desire or purpose to absorb your organization into ours, or to be absorbed by you, that we have extended to you our fraternal greetings, and poened this correspondence. Though there are no differences between us sufficient to hinder our cordial co-operation as a united Church; though in doctrine identical, and in order not dissimilar, and, as I believe, one in spirit, yet I should regard a mutual fusion into a single Church as a calamity to both. What the changes of time and "the logic of events" may bring about in the future, is not for us to forecast. But at present we believe we have a mission which justifies our distinctive organization, and we are willing to concede a like conviction to you.

But, sir, the question has arisen in my mind, Is it not possible to utilize our present pleasant relations into something more than a formal interchange of courtesies? If our correspondence is to be anything more than a name, we would have your people when they come among us, find a spiritual home in our churches, and your ministers a cordial welcome in our pulpits. (And, sir, if you continue to send us as delegates those who are as acceptable as your first representative, you need not be surprised if some of our rich congregations not only welcome them to their pulpits, but try to keep them there.) And so we would have our people, who find new homes on Southern soil, find also warm hearts among Southern Presbyterians, and recognition in your commonwealth of Israel. And if one of your eligible churches should see fit to lay violent hands upon any of our ministers, and make him its pastor, I think there are some of us who could bear the infliction with a very great deal of Christian resignation. And why cannot we co-operate in the missionary work, and the work of evangelization? The issues of our Board of Publication should not be unacceptable to your libraries, when some of them bear the imprints of names, or at least of a name, honored in your present councils. Your own literature will make its way among us, as the bands of our fellowship are more closely drawn; and as we

know each other better, we will love each other more. Sir, I am speaking with the freedom of one who feels himself among brethren; and I think I am not exceeding my commission, and have not mistaken the spirit of those whom I represent, if I say that we would be glad to co-operate with you, and, through you, in that one most important and most difficult work, which is peculiarly your own, in the instruction, the elevation and evangelization of that portion of your population who, in their changed relations, are exposed to peculiar dangers. Voluntary organizations, with fewer claims and far less facilities than those which you could urge, are drawing largely upon the benevolence of our people for this object. But as yet we have heard little from you. Our people do not understand what you are doing in this direction, or would be willing and zealous to do, if the means were at your disposal. Is there not some one among you who could be spared long enough to set them right on this subject, and turn the current of their liberality into another and safer channel? It is not for me to intimate your course of action; but you will pardon me for calling your attention to a field of labor and usefulness in which I think we are able and willing to aid your endeavors.

I ought, perhaps, to tell you something of our Church and its progress. By the minutes of the last General Synod, which I have had the pleasure to lay upon your table, you will see that we number 4 synods, 33 classes, 467 churches, 510 ministers, 63,483 communicants. Our contributions for the year were, for congregational purposes, nearly a million of dollars, and for religious and benevolent objects $326,039. We have missionary stations in India, China and Japan, and for this object, last year, expended $75,000. We have two theological seminaries, and two colleges under denominational influence and patronage. The year now drawing to a close has been observed by us as a centennial memorial, during which we proposed, and I doubt not have succeeded in raising a million of dollars for purposes of Church extension.

I mention these facts to show that the Old Church which was planted on Manhattan Island before the foot of the Pilgrims touched Plymouth Rock, is not dead yet, but is rehabilitating herself for new endeavors to conserve and propagate that common faith enunciated in the symbols formed at Dordrecht, among the earliest and the most authoritative of the confessions of the Reformers. As the lineal descendants of the churches under the cross, who, in the thirty years struggle with Spain and Popery, won for themselves and us the heritage of truth and liberty, we come to bring our friendly greetings. to this latest born of the chuches of our own faith and order, and to bid you God speed in your mission and work.

I thank you, Moderator and this Assembly, for the cordial reception which you have extended to me, and for your patience in listening to these remarks.

The Moderator responded:

With hearty good-will we welcome you as a brother beloved in the Lord. We do so gladly, because of the warm-hearted reception which your body gave to our delegate; because we love and admire your grand and noble old Church; and because we recognize you as one with us. When you so beautifully spoke of your former associates, and mentioned the honored men whose character you so touchingly delineated, our hearts were filled with gladness. Oh! how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. The memory of the men you mentioned is a rich fragrance in the hearts of these brethren. Those names are embalmed in our best affections, and we hope to meet those fathers where we shall part no more forever.

Let me say, that we, as a Church, have no sympathy whatever with that latitudinarian principle which would gather conflicting and discordant elements in an organic union. It is not like the seamless robe of the Saviour; it is rather like the many-colored coat given to Joseph. There is no unity of principle; it is an outward unity; it is not a unity and not an exponent of doctrine.

We certainly would consider it anything else but a calamity for one of your ministers to take charge of the very best Church we have. It would do my heart

good to see you occupy such a place as that which you once filled among us. We would rejoice in it as a blessing.

In regard to our co-operation in the great work of Foreign Missions, we would heartily unite with you in that, as in every other good work. In relation to that peculiarly delicate and difficult subject which you referred to, I hardly know what to say. You know the dangers that environ it. You have generously offered your money; can you send us men to help in the work we desire to be done?

You are too familiar with our Church for me to mention any of her peculiarities. You were too intimately connected with the important educational interests of our Church in this Synod, and with all her operations, for me to give you any statistics. While it may be that some of us who come from the borders of civilization may not have heard that you have ceased to preach in Dutch, I know that you who live in the centre of civilization know what we are doing. I am glad that your Church is making such progress as it is. We rejoice in the advance of the Redeemer's kingdom—that Churches, united with us in faith and spirit, and in heart, are enlarging their borders and strengthening their stakes.

In the work of winning souls to Christ, our Church desires to take an honored place, and we are determined by the blessing of God to hold up that "blue banner," which has waved in the smoke of many well-fought battle-fields where truth was the issue. We are determined that this blue banner shall not remain stationary—shall not be lowered. No, no, every instinct of the heart, every memory of the past, every exigency of the present, every hope of the future, make it our duty and our delight to go forward in the work of winning souls for Jesus. And now we wish to move with you shoulder to shoulder, and heart to heart, and that the blessing of God may rest upon you and upon your noble and faithful Church.

REPORT OF REV. DR. VAN ZANDT, CORRESPONDING DELEGATE TO THE PRESBYTERIAN ASSEMBLY, SOUTH.

To the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America. (1872.)

The undersigned was appointed by the General Synod a Corresponding Delegate to represent the Reformed Church, at the meeting of the "General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States," (South), and begs leave to present the following report:

In discharging the duty assigned to him your delegate attended the sessions of the Assembly which convened at Richmond, Va., on the 16th of May, 1872. Having presented his credentials he was received with every possible demonstration of welcome, and during his entire sojourn and presence in the Assembly, which continued till near its close, he was gratified in receiving, as the delegate of the Reformed Church, continual expressions of the high estimation and fraternal regard entertained by our Southern brethren for our venerable Church and its ministry. Your delegate was impressed with the conviction, that if it should be deemed desirable and practicable to extend our borders by forming an organic union with any other church, the General Assembly of the Church, South, would be found nearest in accord with our doctrinal standards, and open the widest and most promising field for the work of a united Church. Your delegate was careful to intimate to the Assembly, that the only union sought for by this correspondence, was "the Unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace." But he is persuaded that if the time should arrive, when our mission as a Church can best be fulfilled by a union with some other, our brethren of the South would not be averse to entertaining the proposition of a nearer alliance. Your delegate also ventured to suggest that possibly, with our present relations, we could aid them by a co-operation in missionary work, especially among that portion of their population whose changed condition seems to call for special efforts in their behalf. This suggestion was most kindly received and seconded, with the earnest request that we would send them both men and money for the important and difficult work.

In taking leave of your delegate, the Assembly, through its Moderator, renewed its warm expressions of gratification at the correspondence which had been opened, and sent its Christian greetings with fervent prayers for our progress and prosperity as a Church, to this General Synod.

The Rev. Dr. Moses D. Hoge, of Richmond, was appointed Corresponding Delegate to this Synod, and the Rev. Dr. Joseph R. Wilson, of the Theological Seminary, Columbia, S. C., his alternate.

Respectfully submitted,
A. B. VAN ZANDT.

III.

On the fifth day of the session, the General Synod of the Reformed Church meeting, at Brooklyn, (1872,) proceeded with the reception of fraternal delegates. Rev. Dr. Van Zandt, delegate to the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, South, at Richmond, read his report, which had already been referred to the Committee on Correspondence. The Synod then listened to

THE ADDRESS OF REV. DR. J. R. WILSON, OF COLUMBIA, S. C.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States (which I represent in the absence of Dr. Hoge) has cause for gratulation in view of the kindly intercourse which has sprung up between this venerable Synod and itself. You will reflect that, since the period of our separate organization as a church, eleven years ago, we have been comparatively isolated—first by the wall of fire with which the civil war environed us, and then by the almost thicker wall of prejudice, whose chill presence succeeded the heat of the other—we have been, to a great extent, isolated from the residue of the Christian world. It was your church, sir, that first found an opening in the barrier of separation, and extended a fraternal hand, which, as with equal gratification and promptitude we grasped, sent a thrill of joy through our entire body. And when you came, you came not to scold us, to reproach us, to judge us. Your language was not the language of a pity, which was intended to conceal a certain measure of patronizing contempt; but it was that nobler language which brotherly sympathy and Christian love alone know how to utter and intone, and which we, of all God's people on earth, were in a condition to prize at its full worth. We recognize in it the spirit of your own sainted Livingston, that illustrious peace-maker, the supreme result of whose work in 1772 you are at this very time celebrating in centennial memorial.

That same language which first found eloquent tongue in the welcome address of Dr. Todd you have, within the past few weeks, again been pleased to repeat by the mouth of one whom we regard as our own with a family feeling scarcely less strong than he is regarded by yourselves—the gifted Van Zandt—whose preaching and other labors in the gospel used to be a glory to us, as now they are to you. I need not try to tell with what emotions we have responded to the advances you thus have made. I know that we love you all, and have come to long for the very closest alliance with the church here represented, that is compatible with the continued existence of mutual affection and reciprocal confidence. We do not forget that within the past thirty years you have quite doubled your ministry, your membership, your churches, and more than quadrupled your wealth and your efficiency, so that you stand to-day a church body "fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth," a body "making increase unto the edifying of itself in love." We rejoice in your prosperity and in all the evidences of it; and honor you for the peaceful modes in which you have achieved it all.

Nor do we cease to remember, with what warm thankfulness, that your doctrinal faith is, to-day, as sound as when you received it at the hands of the Reformers; and that you are as richly entitled to the name you bear—the *Reformed* Church. Equally with yourselves do we revere the thirty-seven articles of the Synod of Dort—the Heidelberg Catechism—the Belgic Confession—and find

in them, as you do in our scarcely different symbols of faith, the luminous exhibition of those five cardinal points of our common Calvinistic theology, upon which our common Presbyterianism has stood during so many ages of conflict and conquest.

Your ecclesiastical government, too, is essentially the same with that which we maintain. So, too, your forms of worship are, for the most part, those with which we are familiar. We do not, indeed, feel that the gown is an indispensable ornament of our pulpits—nor that aught of an enjoined liturgy is a necessity of our solemn services—but, then, we think that you all look the better for your flowing silk, and you are none the less evangelical for such small portions of established ritual as you deem appropriate—and (there is no telling) we may ourselves one of these days be persuaded to imitate you in both.

You will suffer me, in this connection, to advert more particularly to a subject which, at the present hour, occupies the pens and fills the tongues of many good people. I allude to the subject of organic ecclesiastical union—an organic complaint, it is to be feared, in the cases of not a few sickly, sentimental Christians. As to the possibility of such a union, to be instituted between this Synod and our Assembly, some of us in the South have been venturing to dream. Nor has our dream been altogether rebuked by the waking thought. It possesses a certain coherency and substance, and may bear examination. I am not, indeed, authorized to inaugurate measures which look to so desirable an end. I know, too, that you are not engaged in devising any scheme by which such a consummation may be reached. I think, however, I am not passing the boundary of prudence when I say that the Assembly with which you are now in auspicious correspondence is ready to join hands with this General Synod whenever the favorable moment shall have come for sealing the matrimonial contract. We are standing aloof from other churches in our independent attitude, not because of any pique or pride, nor yet because we see good nowhere except in ourselves. We do behold in this body a number of elements which, if commingled with what is congenial in us, would serve to produce a compound of an excellent sort, wherein none of your peculiarities need be lost, and wherein some of ours might be helped to a brighter conspicuousness. I believe this, that if your Church shall soon overlap the line by which it has been separated from our kindred Presbyterianism, and, uniting with us, shall contribute its due share to the solution of certain ecclesiastical problems now peculiar to our position and constituting a part of our specified mission, you will have found an outlet to the working of your organization which will communicate a stimulus to your energies, such as you have not hitherto felt, and raise you to a point of usefulness, from whose outlook the future will be seen to glow before your eyes with the purest and finest promise. Do I step beyond the limit of propriety when I ask you to think of this matter, and to discover whether a way may not be opened for our actually coming together in such a union as shall be at once serviceable to yourselves and beneficial to us?

Meanwhile, there is another word whose significancy is to be regarded as scarcely less potential than the word union. It is the word co-operation. The various corps of an army may not always be safely merged in one; but, first, for the reason that they are of the same grand army, they ought so to post themselves as to be enabled to act in thorough concert whenever the exigencies of the common cause shall require. With respect to one, at least, of those departments of Christian effort in which the body I represent is called to move, it is singularly situated, and, so far as outside Presbyterianism is concerned, has had to move almost alone; or, if not this, in a certain degree of conflict with others of similar faith

You well know what it is to which I refer. We are in immediate contact with that large population whose recent sudden change of social and political relations has made them at once a source of new difficulty, and an object of new interest to all philanthropists. We feel our obligations toward this people, but we at the same time feel the special hardships which those obvious obligations impose upon us. We are hampered by the painful fact of their having been impressed with the belief that their former masters occupy toward them an attitude unfriendly, if

not antagonistic. Many of them, however, are still connected with our churches; and were we allowed access to their hearts, unhindered by all political considerations, we could soon effectively offer to them the gospel in a manner which would be attended with abundant success. As it is, we are endeavoring with consistent good-will to overcome the prejudices of all our colored people, in order to bear to them the goodness of a common salvation; and in time, in concert with our Southern evangelical denominations, will probably remove the accidental obstacles that now interpose. But we need help, sympathy, not only, but substantial help. We need co-operation—*your* co-operation. And if you or any other of God's people on this more favored side of the line, which lately was a line of war, but which we fondly believe will one day be altogether a line of peace—if you who now have wealth far beyond what we can hope for generations to acquire—and with wealth have the ear of the world, which we have not at all—will consent to entrust to us a portion of this wealth, and of whatever power may be gained by helping us to a voice which Christianity everywhere shall hear, we promise to give a good account of its expenditure in the increased spiritual prosperity of a race of people whose souls honestly we love, and whose only enslavement we desire is, that they shall be brought into the service of Christ, their Master and ours. I will not make this the occasion for finding fault with those men who, being accustomed to see no good in our Southern Christianity, still are pleased to close their eyes to its existence or its worth. At present our chief, at least our most conspicuous, sin is in our poverty, and from this you, amongst others, can aid in redeeming us. Had we the means, as we have the will, we could, by the blessing of God, make the wilderness about us bloom as the rose. We are doing something in this direction, and are not hopelessly discouraged, but we would do much, would do more and more in the hard field where so great a portion of our work lies. Pardon the candor of an appeal which would not have been made were our confidence in your friendship less, and were the sincerity of the motive not sufficiently clear.

It only remains for me to thank you for the kind attention you have been pleased to give to these remarks, and, in the name of the General Assembly I here personate, to extend to you, sir, and through you to this Synod, and to all the Classes and Churches herein represented, our most cordial greetings, with the prayer that the blessing of the God of all grace may abundantly rest upon your entire body of believers.

RESPONSE OF THE PRESIDENT.

The President of the Synod in reply said:

Dear Brother, the warm welcome which I endeavored to express when you took your seat among us, has been in feeling growing warmer during the intercourse we have had, and now culminates in ardent love for you and the body which you represent. We have sometimes heard questions raised as to the propriety and policy of expending money and trouble in personal delegations, but we feel that the emotions which your words have awakened in our hearts are worth immeasurably more than can be computed in money. We have heard your statements with profound feeling, and cannot shut our eyes to the providential circumstances of our and your history. It has been remarked by many that we have facilities for work more than we can use, and it has been asked why we have so many seminaries and other institutions endowed beyond our needs. You have intimated the purpose which God had in view, and the hearts of the Synod, as of one man, leap responsive to the suggestions you have made.

The President then referred to the Cross as the sign in which the Reformed Church goes on to conquest, and closed with an earnest expression of the affectionate regard entertained by the Synod towards the body which Dr. Wilson represented.

OPINION OF THE PRESS.

The New York *Evangelist*, in noticing this proposal, comments upon it as follows:

This project of union may, at first glance, excite surprise. But the advantages which it offers cannot be overlooked by either party. The Presbyterian Church South would no longer be sectional, as the Reformed would supply it with a highly respectable Northern element that has never rendered itself obnoxious, like the Northern General Assemblies, to Southern feelings, while it would receive a large accession of wealth and strength. On the other hand the Reformed Church would emerge from the comparative humility of its position, with its four or five hundred churches, and, in connection with the Presbyterian Church South, would command respect for number as well as character, and occupy a denominational position entitling its voice to a weight it has never yet possessed.

Some difficulties, of course, would obstruct the consummation of the suggested union, but they would be rather those of ecclesiastical order than of doctrine. So far as the material of the two Churches is concerned, the project might be pronounced feasible enough, if not desirable. But we apprehend that the ancient prejudice which rallied, though vainly, to retain the "Dutch" in the official name of the Reformed Church, would take even graver umbrage at a proposition which would require also the surrender of the word "Reformed," and leave the representative of Dutch ecclesiastical ascendancy in the New World shorn of every external badge of a descent of which it may well be proud. Still, in these times, the bare proposition of such an union has no little significance.

IV.

Address to the Synod of Missouri (O. S.), Oct. 10, 1872, by Rev. J. S. Grasty, D. D., of Shelbyville, Ky., Delegate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States.

Moderator, Fathers, and Brethren:

I stand before you to-day as the delegate from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. I am commissioned to bear to this Synod heartfelt salutations, Christian sympathy, and honest expressions of fraternal regard. The authority entrusted to me does not extend further. The body that I represent did not think it delicate to advise, much less to urge, a court of Jesus Christ, composed of such constituents as this, in reference either to expediency or duty. It is presumed that the Synod of Missouri understands its own business, and the obligations flowing therefrom, far better than parties, however kindly disposed, who live at a distance, and who are acquainted, only at second hand, with the facts and the situation. Whether, therefore, in the matter of organic union, you shall decide, either now, in the future, or ever at all, to cast in your lot with another, is a question which the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States feels it but fair and graceful to leave to the calm deliberations of your own enlighted judgment. It is not that we are indifferent to the discussion, and the results, but this conclusion is reached by a sense of manliness as respects ourselves, and of courtesy in regard to you. For notwithstanding our backwardness to counsel or suggest, I am persuaded, that no where in the world does the pulse of Christian confidence and affection beat more steadily and truly towards this Synod, than in that Assembly which I have the honor to represent. But it is due to this very fellowship, and trust, that we determined not to meddle in your affairs. For

we are willing to accord to those whom we honor and love—to those whose history and faith are so nearly identified with our own, a wisdom sufficient to guide, outside of advice or dictation proffered from abroad.

It may be interesting to know that the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States, during the year ending April 1, 1872, reports:

Synods,	11
Presbyteries,	56
Ministers and Licentiates,	912
Candidates,	205
Churches,	1,545
Members added on examination,	5,561
Adults baptized,	1,685
Infants baptized,	3,799
Children in S. S. and Bible Classes,	55,943
Whole number of communicants,	95,000

MONEYS CONTRIBUTED.

Domestic Missions and Sustentation,	$51,899
Foreign Missions,	41,000
Education,	47,532
Publication,	10,479
Invalid Fund,	8,512
Pastors' Salaries,	432,000
Congregational Purposes,	415,955
Miscellaneous,	76,362

It will be seen at a glance, that in the increase of members, and candidates for the gospel ministry, there is much to excite gratitude and praise to the great Head of the Church. The Spirit of awakening and revival has been poured upon the congregations, while the Theological Seminaries, in Virginia and South Carolina, report additions to their lists unparalleled in the history of these "schools of the prophets."

If the contributions of our Zion appear to fall short, let it be remembered that these are the offerings of that South which, seven years ago, was a desolation. In one section her wealth was scattered, her fields wasted, her homes decaying, or wholly destroyed; while in another region, congregations were taxed with vexatious lawsuits, and in the end, forced to surrender the sanctuaries in which their fathers had worshiped. Litigation, loss of property, and the necessity imposed of building new houses of worship, and also parsonages for ministers turned out of doors, these unusual calls diverted large sums of money which, otherwise, might have flowed into the treasuries of our different Committees. I mention these facts not to excite bitterness (for would to God all occasion for bitterness, and all bitterness itself, were clean gone forever) but to vindicate justice and prevent misconception.

Nevertheless, much, very much, has been accomplished by a people who, stripped, almost to nakedness, in every particular, were encompassed by diversified needs, not a single one of which, could be wholly silenced or adjourned. However scant the income, nothing could wait. A little relief must be afforded forthwith to each, or destruction was inevitable to all. Hence with such divisions and subdivisions of funds, it was impossible in the nature of the case, to donate largely to any one object. But, thanks to our Heavenly Father, obstacles are gradually disappearing, and a field of opportunity opens to the Presbyterianism of the South, wider and more inspiriting than the fathers ever knew. It is our

purpose, therefore, imploring divine help, to go forth to possess this land in the strength of that gospel which is the power of God unto salvation unto every one that believeth.

It may not be amiss to mention just here, that, in accordance with the appointment of the General Assembly at its sessions in Huntsville, Ala., May, 1871, Rev. J. H. Bryson attended the General Synod of the Reformed (Dutch) Church in America, which met in the city of Albany, New York, on June 7th, 1871. Mr. Bryson, in the General Assembly that met at Richmond, Va., on May 16, 1872, reported as follows: [See p. 90.]

Moderator, those who were present in Richmond, Va., and heard the eloquent words—the words of doctrinal accord—of overflowing sympathy—which fell from the lips of that brother (Van Zandt)—can never recall the occasion without recurring sentiments of thankfulness and emotion. For I am persuaded that, in that vast assembly of spectators and commissioners, not a heart was unmoved, scarcely a cheek which did not moisten with a tear. It was felt in every bosom that the delegate himself, and that noble communion which he represented—in symbols, in doctrine, in principles, and in witness for the truth—are so essentially one with ourselves—the line of demarcation so impalpable, and the elements of attraction so large, that organic union between the bodies is an event of unavoidable fulfillment. Mutual confidence, identity of aim—obliterates the thin shadow of ecclesiastical divergence, and already an effort has been made to substantiate any difference that divides the one from the other. With this homogeneity of government, this oneness of faith and of spirit, it is impossible, I repeat, in the nature of things, that we can longer exist apart. And the union of the Dutch Reformed Church—renowned in its ministers and its congregations, for soundness of doctrine and purity of life—with the Presbyterian Church in the United States, will be an event fruitful of rejoicing to every lover of truth and fraternity, throughout the land. God speed the day.

Moderator, in standing before the Synod of Missouri, and on a critical occasion like the present, may I not be allowed to state, in briefest outline, those doctrines and principles which have ever been cherished by the General Assembly whose delegate I am. It would, indeed, be pleasant to enlarge upon that "form of sound words," which, dear to the fathers, in the day of their adversity, became, and has ever remained, a symbol of fidelity to the cause of the Master. But the time allotted admonishes me to be short. We hold—

1. That no improvement has been, or can be, made upon the "faith once delivered to the saints." As Inspiration furnished it, so it must stand. Nothing can be added, not a word taken away. As the fathers held, so hold we, to the federal headship of Adam; and teach that "the sinfulness of that estate whereinto man fell consisteth in the guilt of Adam's first sin, the want of that righteousness wherein he was created and the corruption of his nature whereby he is utterly indisposed, disabled, and opposite unto all that is spiritually good and wholly inclined to all that is evil and that continually."

2. That the redemption of the fallen proceeds only upon the ground of a gracious covenant; and that this agreement between the Father and the Son, existed before the worlds were made. A seed was promised in the councils of eternity, and the atonement was provided inside of this covenant in order to ransom and redeem the "chosen generation." As Adam was the representative of the race, so Jesus Christ is the Head of His people, and as Adam's disobedience entailed

guilt, misery, and death upon all, so the righteousness of Christ, set down to the account of the believer, delivers from condemnation, and introduces to life. No man could bring a price for his brother: The Lord laid help upon ONE who is mighty to save. Salvation is of God.

3. Justification by faith, and by faith alone, as the instrumental condition. And we hold that this justification is a purely judicial act, and does not proceed upon any work or merit of the creature, but is pronounced solely upon the ground of that perfect conformity to law "in all things," which none ever possessed save the believer's great Representative and Surety, Jesus Christ THE RIGHTEOUS. Faith itself is a gracious gift, and through God's power, begets that condition of mind and heart where confidence in the flesh is renounced, inability confessed, and the soul looks to Jesus and to Jesus only. No man can come to the Son except the Father who sent the Son draw him, yet God's people are willing in the day of HIS power.

4. The agency of the Holy Spirit. This is manifest in regeneration. For we are "His workmanship." "A new creation." "Begotten again unto a lively hope." Intellect, affections, will, the entire man is brought into subjection. The Spirit of all grace also begets conversion, and repentance unto life, working in the renewed and pious heart, to will and to do of his good pleasure.

5. We hold that the provisions of grace contain and embrace every condition, mean, and instrument necessary to the believer's sanctification, perseverance, and final safety. Every item, indispensable to the execution of redemption, was irreversibly secured in the covenant itself. The agreement was positive, and irrepealable, that the Redeemer should "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied." He should have "divided to Him a portion with the great and a spoil with the strong." And in order to this, all that the Father gave Him, in the covenant, must come to Him, and it was and is "the will of the Father which sent Him, that of all which He had given Him, He should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day." God's people are kept by God's power, and no weapon formed against them shall prosper. Every step in the believer's pilgrimage to glory was measured, fenced, and guarded in that sure and well-ordered covenant which was agreed upon in the councils of eternity by the Father and the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Taking the commission of the great God, our Saviour, as it stands, it is ventured to preach these doctrines, which though repugnant to human nature, exalt Jehovah to His throne, while they take away all boasting from the creature, and humble man in the dust. It is thus that the ambassador for Christ goes forth with the word, dependent solely upon that Omnipotent Spirit, that worketh when, and where, He wills.

6. While the Church is in the world it is not of it. True, Church and State are both divine in their origin, and it is the duty of both preacher and people to pray for magistrates, to honor their persons, to pay them tribute and other dues, to obey their lawful commands, and to be subject to their authority for conscience' sake, yet the Church and State have different objects and spheres of action, different governments and officers, and are independent of each other. While the Christian, as citizen, is in duty bound to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, yea more, to cultivate patriotic sentiment, and encourage all due obedience to law, yet it is the opinion of that Assembly whose delegate I am, that no court of Jesus Christ, as such, can endorse any political constitution in all its provisions, requirements, and principles, and profess unabated

loyalty thereto. Neither can it by authority acknowledge and declare its obligation to promote and perpetuate, as far as in it lies, the integrity of any particular form of government, and to strengthen and encourage it, in the exercise of all its functions. We hold that to decide political questions violates the Spirit of Christ's true Church, and usurps over the consciences of the people, the prerogative of the Divine Master Himself. Furthermore, that "there are two distinct and complete governments appointed for man—one the civil government, from the Lord Christ as King of nations, and the other the ecclesiastical government, from the Lord Christ as King of saints. That these two jurisdictions, though to some extent over the same subjects, are ordained of Christ to be kept distinct. That as the power of the sword committed to the civil government may not be used to do the spiritual work of the Church, so, on the other hand, the power of the keys, and the agencies and ordinances of the church government may not be prostituted to the promotion of merely secular and political purposes." "The citizen owes allegiance only to the State, and is bound to uphold the civil government, but the Church, as such, owes allegiance only to the Lord Jesus; His kingdom is the only kingdom she is bound to uphold; hence she can be loyal only to her own King."

I have thus, Moderator, presented in briefest outline, the doctrines and principles for which the General Assembly in the United States are contending before the world. In the name of God we lift up our banners. In conclusion allow me to hope, and to pray, that the deliberations of this Synod may be guided and overruled by Him who is Head over all things to the Church.

MODERATOR'S RESPONSE.

In the name of the Old School Synod of Missouri, I give to you, dear Brother, a most hearty welcome. We rejoice to receive you as the representative of a Christian people whom we sincerely love; and in everything that concerns them we take a very deep interest. In the sore trials through which it has pleased the great Head of the Church, in the mysterious dispensations of his providence, to suffer your churches to pass, we assure you, beloved Brother, they have had our deepest sympathy—nay, in a good measure we have been fellow sufferers. We most sincerely rejoice to hear through you, that the rainbow of hope is once more seen in your sky, that the clouds are all dispersing and that the bright sunshine of a fairer and better day pours its radiance over you. Now, my Brother, we are glad and rejoice with exceeding great joy in view of your present and prospective prosperity, just as before our hearts poured out their sorrow at your adversity. No language better expresses the emotions awakened on hearing what great things God is doing for his people than the word of the inspired poet: "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion we were like them that dreamed. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing. The Lord hath done great things for us whereof we are glad." With what pleasure has the Synod heard you tell of your hundreds proclaiming the great salvation, of the large number of your churches forming a mighty army of Christian soldiers to push on the conquests of our Immanuel, of the crowds of children gathered with each returning Sabbath into your Sunday-schools to be trained and led to Jesus and to heaven, of

the nearly six thousand souls happily converted to the Lord during the past year, and last, though not least, our souls thrilled with pleasure at learning how much God has enabled his struggling and afflicted people to do for the perishing heathen. In response to the summary of gospel doctrine and ecclesiastical polity which you have so clearly placed before the Synod to-day we can only utter a loud emphatic and heartfelt *Amen*.

The Synod has now under consideration our ecclesiastical relations. What may be the result touching organic union, I, of course know not. One thing, however, I may say for myself, there are other matters which I cannot but consider much sorer evils than even organic severance, in the church of God. In truth, from one point of view, I think the church has ever been one and can never be rent in twain. Just as the great rock strata which underlie the surface of our earth, show in each marked characteristics, teaching us that every separate stratum is *absolutely one*, however much deep seas and gaping mountain gorges may seem to cut and divide it, so the church in every separate part and member is marked as one inseparable body of our Lord Redeemer, by those heavenly beliefs and glorious experiences which you, my Brother, were enabled so clearly, so forcibly, and so eloquently to place before and urge upon us on last evening from that sacred desk. Yes, indeed, Christ's true and holy church is *one*. And his promise is fulfilled "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." *Christ's* CHURCH IS ONE and his prayer is not unheard, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."

Dear Brother, bear with you to the churches you so faithfully represent, our warmest Christian greeting and assurances of our undying love.

OPINION OF THE PRESS.

"My kingdom is not of this world." It is refreshing in these days of Cæsarism to find two bodies of Christians who have warmly supported opposite sides in the political quarrel which has convulsed this country, able to approach each other in perfect kindness. Such is the case with our brethren of the Reformed Synod and our own General Assembly. We understand each other thoroughly. They were almost unanimously Federal in sentiment and we Confederate. But both bodies have kept politics out of church affairs, and so now, that the war is over, there is no barrier betwixt us. We can correspond fraternally—or, should Providence favor it, we can unite organically without compromising anybody's principles. And among the motives which seem to render this proposed union desirable, not the least is the sublime testimony it shall bear to the supremacy of the Redeemer and the separateness of his kingdom from all secular concerns.—*Memphis Presbyterian.*

V.

[It was intended to insert here the Address of Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D., but, as it was not written, the effort to obtain it has not yet succeeded.]

The matter of appendix is quoted thus: I. and II. from *The Christian Intelligencer*, New York, June 8, 1871, and *The Central Presbyterian*, Richmond, Va., May 29, 1872; III. from *The Christian Observer and Commonwealth*, Louisville and Richmond, June 26, 1872; IV. from *The Old School Presbyterian*, St. Louis, Nov. 1, 1872.

[*From the Old School Presbyterian, Nov.* 15, 1872.]

"DR. LAWS' LETTER TO THE SYNOD OF MISSOURI.

Dr. Laws' Letter to the Synod of Missouri, which was sent out last week as a supplement to THE OLD SCHOOL PRESBYTERIAN, is already in pamphlet form, and may be had *gratis*, on application at this office.

In giving an explicit answer to the questions—"*How came the Synod of Missouri into its present position?*" and "*What is there to forbid its union with the Northern Assembly?*"—Dr. Laws ably reviews the controversy, not only vindicating the Synod completely, but also demonstrating that the Assembly, in the days of wild excitement, proceeded unscripturally and contrary to the law of the church, and (what is of vastly more serious moment) has, in these calmer times, persisted in and defended its wrong-doing, hedging it securely with ecclesiastical and civil sanctions.

The spirit of this letter—its manner of speech—is unexceptionable as its matter is unanswerable. The Doctor exemplifies *Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*

An appendix contains the correspondence between the Reformed (Dutch) Church and the Southern Presbyterian Church, and also, that between the latter body and our own Synod.

We shall take great pleasure in sending this important document to all who wish it."

The Pamphlet edition of 1000 copies of the Letter was almost immediately exhausted, but in response to numerous calls, a new edition of the Letter with the entire Appendix is now published.

☞ The pamphlet issued Nov. 8, 1872 *ended* on preceding page: but in March, 1873, another pamphlet was issued and paged from p. 103 onward to make it continuous with the first. The two are now issued as one continuous pamphlet.

APPENDIX

(CONTINUED.)

V.

Address to the Synod, by Rev. Cyrus Dickson, D. D., and response of Rev. John Montgomery, D. D., Moderator.

[*From the Old School Presbyterian, St. Louis, Mo., Nov.* 15, 1872.]

REV. CYRUS DICKSON, D. D., OF THE NORTHERN ASSEMBLY, BEFORE THE SYNOD OF MISSOURI. (O. S.)

The *Herald and Presbyter* [of Cincinnati,] has the following:

"Rev. Dr. Cyrus Dickson, one of our Home Missionary Secretaries and the Permanent Clerk of our General Assembly, was present as a member of the Committee appointed by the Detroit Assembly to visit the Synod and open the way for the restoration of cordial relations looking to union. He was most kindly received, and though we have seen no report of his speech, we are sure, unless he was left to forget himself, that he spoke words of truth and love, in the spirit of the Master, that went into every ear and every heart, and poured out of many tearful eyes, making men feel that the time was short, and that we are all brethren, and that the ranks of Israel should be closed up for the great and imminent conflict which is upon the church."

"THE OLD SCHOOL PRESBYTERIAN don't give us Dr. Dickson's speech."

We quote the foregoing, for several reasons. First, it is an acknowledgment, by one of our most unscrupulous opponents, that Dr. Dickson "was most kindly received." This would have been very strange, if (as some of Dr. D.'s friends seem to have surmised) his mission had been to a band of ruffians, far more ready to tear him to pieces than to treat him with gentlemanly courtesy. He impressed the Synod most favorably, and on the other hand, "his Christian spirit and greeting were," as Dr. Laws says in his *Letter*, "appreciated and reciprocated with a cordiality, manliness and candor that must have commanded his own admiration." Secondly, while Dr. Dickson acquitted himself eloquently, and "spoke words of truth and love, in the spirit of the Master, that went into every ear and every heart," it will be gathered from the Moderator's response

that the effect of our visitor's admirable remarks was not exactly as represented by the *Herald and Presbyter*. Thirdly, we have not given Dr. Dickson's speech, not because, as our dearly beloved brother Monfort seems to insinuate, we are afraid it might have much influence in furthering the union of the Synod and the Assembly, but simply because we have not been able to obtain a copy of it. Rather than attempt to report Dr. D.'s remarks, we preferred that he should speak for himself, and therefore we took pains to request him to reduce his address to writing. A similar request was made of other visiting brethren and of the Moderator, and was complied with. Dr. Dickson writes us, "The address, as to its language was extemporaneous, and my memory is unable to recall it with sufficient distinctness to reproduce it. I am sincerely sorry not to be able, therefore, to comply with your kind invitation."

The Dr. assured the Synod of the Assembly's fraternal regard—deplored the separation and its consequent alienations and troubles—expressed satisfaction with the action of Synod respecting union with the Southern and Reformed Churches—besought the Synod, in its movement for union, not to leave his Church "out in the cold"—and asked the Synod to appoint a committee to confer with a committee of which he is a member, concerning our grievances, &c., &c.

MODERATOR'S RESPONSE.

Dear Brother:—Suffer me, on behalf of the Old School Synod of Missouri, to give you the earnest grasp of Christian friendship, as the organ accredited to this Synod from the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Let me say to you that this Synod feels the full force of what you have so pertinently uttered touching the sad divisions which, for mournful years, have distracted and torn and rent our unhappy churches. You have, with great clearness and unanswerable logic, deduced the lamentable evils which must, with inevitable certainty, flow from these most unfortunate divisions; and you have, with an unusual degree of earnestness, exhorted us to exert ourselves in prayer and effort toward healing these bleeding wounds in our beloved Zion.

My Brother, we acknowledge all you have so eloquently delivered. In our poor estimation, however, the half has not been told. Not only are our churches split and weakened almost unto death: not only is unholy strife indulged in, and a sad example set before the ungodly world; but even our poor missionary fields can find no rest. Take a single example. I myself organized a small and struggling church of some fifteen or twenty members, and very soon thereafter, a brother (?) came along, persuaded the people that (though sent by my Presbytery) I was not authorized to organize them—that, in fact, they were not organized in a constitutional manner, and proceeded to do the work over, placing a church of different connection on the same ground, using, in great part, the same material, and finally so conducting matters as to make it very doubtful whether either will ever prosper.

You speak of frankness: I will endeavor to be equally frank with yourself. My Brother, whence came all these sad influences and results? That is the question. There, too, rests the responsibility. We solemnly aver the work is not ours. Our present position is not of our choosing. We did all we could to avoid it. We stand to-day in relation to your Assembly, just where they put us—nay, in the posture into which they forced us. I was myself so grieved and overwhelmed by the sad disasters which came thick and fast upon us, that for a long time I knew not

what to do or where to go, and stood absolutely alone, without church relations. For years our Presbyteries claimed their place and their rights in our dear Old School mother church. Again and again we sent our delegates to the Assembly, to have them coldly and cruelly dismissed, and sent back to us—their seats denied, as recognized members in that venerable court. It is unnecessary to recount the sad history of the past further.

You speak of our "grievances." Ah! sir, grievances are slight matters—grievances we could bear: but your Assembly has put burdens on our consciences—insupportable burdens—which stern duty forbids us to tolerate. These intolerable burdens it is peculiarly fit and proper for your Assembly to lift from off us. When it may please the Assembly so to do, we shall rejoice. O, sir, I would gladly sacrifice this poor crippled right arm to have these agitations cease—these rude storms which beat so disastrously on the ark of God subside; and I think this Synod would join in such a sacrifice.

You speak of your Scotch blood. Well, I have the blood of an English mother coursing through my veins, which may impart to my composition something of stubbornness. I may not,—and (I will undertake to say for this Synod,) they may not do violence to a Christian conscience. You tell us to appoint a committee to make known our grievances to the Assembly. The Synod can not persuade itself that the Assembly is at all ignorant in this respect. Besides it ill comports with either duty or dignity for this Synod to place itself in the attitude of one seeking terms with the Assembly which you represent. Go, my Brother, and tell your people, "They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison: and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out."

VI.

The Presbyterian.

[*The Presbyterian*, Philadelphia, Pa., Dec. 21st. 1872, contained the following EDITORIAL. "REV. M. B. GRIER, D. D., EDITOR."]

MISSOURI AND NEW YORK.

If our brethren of the Reformed church (Dutch) wish to know what manner of men are to be found in the Synod of Missouri, which proposes to be a party with them to a tripartite negotiation for union, and what spirit they are of, they will find some information, not very pleasant, but possibly useful to them, in two editorials contained in the *Old-school Presbyterian* of the 6th and 13th inst. After the late meeting of the Old-school Synod a correspondent of the *Presbyterian* gave a very succinct, and we believe correct statement of the state of things in

Missouri, and the relations existing between the two branches of the Presbyterian church in that State. Those of our readers who read the letter will remember that it contained nothing harsh in utterance; no words of scorn or contempt; nothing adapted to arouse the bitter feelings of the past; but that the writer expressed unfeigned regrets for the divisions which now exist, and his hope that a union of the dissevered portions might some day be accomplished.

This very quiet and candid epistle has thrown our contemporary at St. Louis into a most uncomfortable mood. Since the days of the war we have not seen such a sharp phillipic as the editorial of the *Old-school Presbyterian* of the 6th inst. We shall not quote it, or any part of it, and certainly shall not answer the furious scolding; but our readers may judge of the quality of the article when we may say that the writer sneers at the "piety" of our correspondent, in which he says he does not "take stock;" declares him to be "*rather* unscrupulous as to his facts;" asserts that his representations of occurrences in the late meeting were "false," and accuses our Synod of having "stolen churches," and having "tricked" them out of others. These and such like are the words of wrath which dance through the lines of this editorial. So blind is the writer in the violence of his feelings that he strikes at his own friends, and at the most prominent of them all. Our correspondent, in mentioning the fact that the Synod appointed a committee to confer with one from our Assembly, added that the "chairman of the Synod's committee, Rev. Dr. Brookes, is the most influential man in the Synod, and has it in his power to accomplish the union, if he himself consents to it." Whereupon the *Old-school Presbyterian* administers a caution to Dr. Brookes after the following delicate and refined manner:

"It may, or may not, be true that the 'Rev. Dr. Brookes is the most influential man in the Synod.' We are very 'independent' Presbyterians in this Old-school Synod, and are not inclined either to assume or to submit to leadership. But it is not true that Dr. Brookes, 'or any other man,' can accomplish the union of our Synod with the Northern Assembly. It is an insult to suppose it possible for Dr. Brookes to 'consent to it.' But were such a thing possible, and he should be so *great a simpleton* as to put his influence to so perilous a test, he would soon find himself in command of a forlorn company, consisting of—a captain."

We do not know whether the dignified and decorous Synod of the Reformed Church will desire closer union with men whose representative is capable of writing in the style of the *Old-school Presbyterian*, but certainly if they are in pressing need of a master of epithets, all that they have to do is to push on the "negotiations."

Another matter connected with the late meeting of the Old-school Synod of Missouri, and the approach made to that Synod by our Assembly, which deserves mention and some comment, is the pamphlet issued by the Rev. Dr. Laws, in which the relations between the General Assembly and the Synod of Missouri are discussed at length. Of this "letter" (it is addressed to the Synod of Missouri, Old-school, which met at Columbia, Missouri, October 8, 1872,) the North Carolina *Presbyterian* says that "the letter is, in some respects, *a singular production*." We propose to state some of the singularities which have struck us in reading this pamphlet.

Dr. Laws is in connection with the General Assembly of our Church. His pamphlet is simply a frantic effort to prevent the Synod of Missouri from joining the Church of which he is himself a minister. In this the production is undoubtedly "singular." Dr. Laws abides in quietness

during many years as a member of one of our Presbyteries; he passes through the union of the Old and New-school Churches; his name reappears on the new rolls, and no sign is given to the public that the position he has accepted is a disagreeable one. But the moment there appears to be a possibility that the Synod of Missouri will enter into negotiations with the Assembly which he recognizes as the Supreme Court of his Church, he rouses from his quietude, hies to Missouri, arrives too late to make the speech which he has prepared, but publishes it in twenty mortal columns of a newspaper, and then gives it the form of a pamphlet in which to circulate it more widely. We submit that there is something vastly "singular" in such a "production." An indictment of great length and carefully drawn is made against the Church which shelters the accuser, and this is laid at the bar of a foreign body, with the plea that this foreign body will have nothing to do with the corrupt Church to which the accuser belongs. Suppose that one of the ministers of the Dutch Reformed Church in the city of New York had suddenly aroused himself and hurried to the late meeting of the General Synod or the German Reformed Synod in Cincinnati, and with labored arguments besought that Synod to refuse the proffered hand of the Dutch Church. Suppose that to give his plea point and force, he had gathered all the misdeeds and mistakes of the Church in which he ministered, for the past twenty years, and threw the unclean pile on the floor of the German Synod, might not some one there be expected to express his surprise at the "singular" performance? And would it not be a just retort if the accuser was met with the answer, "*You*, sir, at least, have no business with such an indictment in this presence. Whatever may be the truth or falsehood of your allegations, which we do not now intend to examine, it is an unseemly thing in you to come on such an errand. Your Church may be all that you say it is, but we have learned to think little of the man who uncovers the shame of his mother in the midst of strangers." What better has Dr. Laws done to the Church which keeps his name upon her rolls?

There is another thing which adds singularity to this production, which the public attack made upon the Church justifies us in mentioning. On the roll of the Presbytery of New York, Dr. Laws appears thus: "Samuel S. Laws, LL.D., W. C." Dr. Laws, if the reports which have reached us are correct, has laid aside entirely his ministerial functions. His daily business leads him to Wall Street. In other words, Dr. Laws is in the complete sense of the term a "secularized" minister. If we have been misinformed, and have done him injustice in saying this, we will be most happy to correct it. The "singular" thing which we wish to point out is that one so immersed in secularities should set himself forward to be the champion of a "spiritual" Church. It is because of the "*political*" character of the Church to which he belongs that he would guard the unworldly Missourians from contact with it. It has altogether gone astray, corrupting its ways with the decision of political questions, and secular debates, and so has descended from the high position of the pure "bride of Christ" to drag its white robes in the mire of party politics. And so entire is the defection that the only voice now heard for the "unspiritual" Church, the "kingdom that is not of this world," is the voice of one "crying in the wilderness" of New York. Dr. Laws intermits the noting of sales in the gold room for the utterance of a testimony against a "secular" Church and a political ministry.

We marvel greatly how he can pass from his post of witness-bearing in Wall Street to the secularities of the Presbytery of New York. If the

presence of Dr. Adams, or Dr. Hall, or Dr. Shedd, or Dr. Paxton, in the General Assembly would contaminate the representatives of the Old-school Synod of Missouri, are not the garments of the brother from the Stock Exchange defiled when he passes away from that pure and peaceful region to the political contentions of his fellow presbyters? We do not sit in judgment on Dr. Laws for ceasing to make the ministry a great business. To his own Master he stands or falls. We do not reproach him for seeking a livelihood by secular pursuits which are honest and lawful. We determine nothing as to his duty, and will not measure his responsibilities. But when a "secularized" minister steps forth to defame the Church which gives him the minister's name, and heaps words of reproach upon the men who are his peers, that he may thus lengthen out the day of strife and division, we tell him that from him at least all such words are an impertinence which all good men can afford to pass unanswered. There are those in the Church whose lead we will willingly follow even when they show the errors of the Church. When any, in any quarter, strive sincerely to reclaim the Church from what they believe to be a serious defection from her principles of order or faith, we will give them candid hearing, and our assent if they convince our judgment. But they must not come from the midst of crowds of men, grasping eagerly for that which is worldly and sordid. While we hope that we would be ready to greet the prophet of the "spiritual" Evangel wherever he appears, if he brings the signs of a prophet with him, we certainly do not expect to see him issuing forth from the purlieus of the New York Gold Room.

[The Old School Presbyterian, St.. Louis, Mo., Dec. 27th, 1872, contained the following Answer to the above Editorial.]

FURIOUS—WEAK.

A crack has occurred in the crust of dullness which encases the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*. Out of the crack has shot up a remarkably lively display—"sound and fury." Really, we are surprised—and truly, we are pleased—at this show of vigor in our stupidly staid contemporary. Long life to him, and vast improvement in manners and morals!

In his last issue, under the heading, "Missouri and New York," he devotes a column and a half to very savage and very mean abuse of us and of Dr. Laws. The larger portion of this highly concentrated wrath is poured out upon Dr. Laws, for having written the *Letter* which appeared as a Supplement to this paper, and to which frequent reference has been made. Other people have highly commended the temper and language as well as the argument of that *Letter*. But the Philadelphia *Presbyterian* is not restrained, rather is exasperated by the Doctor's mildness and courtesy, and takes no notice whatever of the argument. Calling upon his imagination for the facts as to how the *Letter* originated, he describes it, of course falsely, as "simply a frantic effort to prevent the Synod of Missouri from joining the Northern Church." We say, that, of course, this is false. There was no reason why any sane man should attempt to prevent any such thing. There was no tendency in

the Synod toward the Northern Church. One man, indeed, ventured to breathe a syllable for union in that direction, but he was charitably looked upon as somewhat beside himself. And we think that, since then, he himself has come to a wiser mind.

The *Presbyterian* has, we repeat, nothing to reply to Dr. Laws' reasoning. It seeks to parry his tremendous logic by *breaking him down*. It calls him hard names, such as "secularized" minister, and insinuates that (like one of its special friends, the late D. V. McLean) he has too familiar acquaintance with "the ways that are dark and the tricks that are vain" down in Wall Street. Dr. Laws is able to defend himself, and he may see fit to make that ability felt by the editor who writes of him that when he, "a secularized minister, steps forth to defame the Church which gives him the minister's name, and heaps words of reproach upon the men who are his peers, that he may thus lengthen out the day of strife and division, we tell him that, from him at least, all such words are an impertinence which all good men can afford to pass unanswered."

The occasion of the *Presbyterian's* abuse of ourselves is the strictures we made upon "N.'s" communication to that journal respecting our Synod's late meeting. The surmise that Dr. Nicolls is the author of that communication seems to be correct. His silence is a confession that he wrote it. He is unwilling to retract. He has no explanation to make. He dare not take up the cudgel himself, but, wondrously cunning man! he puts it upon his friend of the *Presbyterian* to battle for him.

That doughty champion assumes the *role* of respectability and moderation—declares that our article was an exceedingly sharp phillipic and that we use very vituperative "epithets," saying that his Synod "stole" some of our churches and "tricked" us out of others. All we have to say is, that we used those obnoxious words deliberately. They express accurately what was done. They describe precisely what plain, honest men understand by thieving and trickery. Perhaps, were our pen guided by the dainty hand and informed by the faultless taste of the very respectable gentleman whose nerves are so shocked by our naughty words, we might say that the churches alluded to were embezzled from us or obtained under false pretences: but in the untamed rudeness of our soul, we prefer the plain Saxon terms to describe such penitentiary offences. Ah, neighbor! it isn't the *epithets* that hurt—(your abuse of Dr. Laws shows that you are an adept in that line)—but it is the facts: and these facts we can prove to you, and that your correspondent "N." had a great hand in them.

The Presbyterian, for purposes of its own, distorts the allusion we made to Dr. Brookes, in reply to "N.'s" insulting suggestion that Dr. Brookes should consent to a union between this Synod and the Northern Church. We did not "strike at" Dr. Brookes. We did not "caution" him. We have no occasion to do either. He and we are of one mind in these matters. He and we know you and your peculiar tactics very well, and we thoroughly appreciate your present effort to make the impression that there is not perfect harmony between us.

But we must dismiss this mild-mannered and ingenuous editor. He says that we had no cause to speak severely of "N.'s" communication. Listen! He says "it contained nothing harsh in utterance; no words of scorn or contempt; nothing adapted to arouse the bitter feelings of the past." Can this be so? Were we so egregiously mistaken? Was it not a member of the Northern Church who first called our attention to "N.'s" article, and reprobated it? Was it not denounced to us by two others in that connection? Does not "N." say, falsely, that the vote on ecclesi-

astical relations was taken before Dr. Dickson's arrival, "on purpose that the message of peace borne by Dr. Dickson might produce no division?" Is there nothing in the following extract, as a sample, to wound our brethren? Is there no contempt intended for the religious views of some of them? Is there no sneering accusation of an utter lack of principle by all of the three parties into which "N." divides the Synod?

"But the danger was avoided by a happy stroke of policy. This was to appoint a committee to take part in the proposed negotiations between the Dutch Reformed and the Southern Church. It was discovered by the Southern party that the Dutch Church was old, that it had no future, and must grow smaller; that it was very rich, in fact, as was stated, 'had more money than it knew what to do with.' True, like the Northern Assembly, it had made deliverances on the war question, but it had money, and could this union be accomplished the reproach of a sectional church would be washed away from them. Therefore they were in favor of this union. The 'stand still party' were in favor of these negotiations because it meant stand still for at least two years more, and in the meantime who knows what might turn up? The Lord might come and take the elect body home. The Northern party were also in favor of appointing the committee to enter into these negotiations because it gave them time, and they were assured that next year would find the number in favor of uniting with the Assembly greater than now. They agreed that there was no prospect of the proposed union with the Dutch Church, for first of all, the Presbyterians were not willing to go over to the Dutch Church; and second, that if the Dutch Church wished to unite with Presbyterians they would first of all endeavor to heal the schism in Christ's body at home, and unite with the brethren they had known, and loved, and trusted for years in their own midst. So all voted for the appointment of the committee, and the danger of division was avoided for another year."

Evidently "N." has written about the Synod of Missouri, under the supposition that its members are such as he is himself, and the *Presbyterian* endorses the supposition.

Evidently, too, the purpose of these men is to prevent the union of the Southern Church, the Reformed Church and this Synod. Gentlemen, we understand you.

[*From the Philadelphia Presbyterian, January* 18, 1873.]

DR. S. S. LAWS AND HIS PAMPHLET.

A FEW weeks ago we referred, in our editorial columns, to a pamphlet which had just been issued by the Rev. S. S. Laws, LL. D., a member of the Presbytery of New York, containing a letter to the Synod of Missouri, (Old School,) which met at Columbia, Missouri, October 8, 1872. This "Letter" we criticised as we thought it deserved, viewing it as the effort of a minister of our Church to hinder or frustrate the effect of a friendly overture made by the General Assembly to which he owed allegiance, to the Old-school Synod of Missouri. We said, further, that as Dr. Laws was himself deeply immersed in secular pursuits in the city of New York, it did not become him to set himself forth as the champion of a "spiritual" Church, or as the utterer of a comprehensive

condemnation of his own Church because of its "secular" and "political" deliverances.

Dr. Laws has sent to us a printed defence of himself and of his pamphlet, which he asks may be inserted in the *Presbyterian*. We respectfully decline, mainly for two reasons, each of which would be sufficient of itself.

1. Our criticisms occupied about one column of the *Presbyterian*—Dr. Laws' reply would fill *six*, and probably run to nearly *seven* columns of our paper. The disproportion is much too great. We do not know any man in the Presbyterian Church to whom we would give *six* continuous columns of the *Presbyterian* for the discussion of any subject, personal or otherwise.

2. Dr. Laws uses language in regard to the editor of this paper which must necessarily exclude him from the use of our columns. We shall not attempt to quote what Dr. Laws is pleased to say of us, and of our criticisms of his pamphlet. It is enough to say that he denounces us as actuated by wrath, malice and all uncharitableness, in our editorial comments upon the "Letter." We can hardly think that, after filling six columns with such bitter denunciations, he *could* expect us to be the vehicle of transmitting them to the world. There are some assailants on whom every man has the right to shut the doors of his office, or the columns of his journal. If Dr. Laws had chosen to send a reply as to our editorial somewhat in proportion to its length, and written in becoming language, we would undoubtedly have published it. But the long and abusive article which he has forwarded to us we most decidedly decline.

Our controversy with Dr. Laws is not a personal one. We have no reason to doubt that he has discharged the offices conferred on him, either by State or Church, well. Our contest with him grows wholly out of the fact that in a pamphlet, carefully prepared, with a view of laying it before the Synod of Missouri (Old-school) "in a printed form," Dr. Laws arraigned the Church of which he was a minister as guilty of "conduct" of a "revolutionary, insubordinate, and destructive character," by which "the General Assembly broke up the relations of the Synod of Missouri to it, misled the civil courts to divest it of property, created a discordant element by misguiding some of its own members, erected on the same territory a rival Synod, &c., &c., (p. 32.) To all this some one might have said in answer that these were the acts of the General Assembly of the Old-school Church, whose existence had ceased, and that the committee which the Synod of Missouri had received was from the Assembly of a new Church, not responsible for the acts of either of the Churches out of which it was constituted. But Dr. Laws repels this suggestion. He asserts (p. 40,) that the "United Assembly is the worthy *successor and heir* of the Assembly whose assumption of power your Synod (*i.e.*, Synod of Misssouri,) so long resisted, and which completely revolutionizes our Presbyterial system, overthrows our ecclesiastical liberty, and resolves the Assembly into a spiritual despotism."

Another suggestion which might be made in the way of palliation, Dr. Laws as decidedly repels. It might be said that the Southern Presbyterian Church had fallen into the same errors, and indulged in some "secular" deliverances. No, says Dr. Laws, their errors were slight and only temporary. "The surprise is," we quote from his pamphlet, "that its garment of praise, as a spiritual body, was not burned up instead of being only scorched a little, and having upon it only the smell of fire." As for the Synod of Missouri (Old School), Dr. Laws' admiration can find no expression save in such great swelling words as these:

"I frankly confess, that as I gaze and reflect upon the position of your little band, its moral sublimity fills me with admiration and thanksgivings, and I feel borne aloft by the conviction that for all your affliction and trials, in the midst of which the hearts of some may have sickened and the knees of others weakened, God has in store for you some glorious reward. Founded on the Rock of Ages, standing upon the old foundation unmoved amidst the surging billows that have broken over you and carried others from their moorings, the eyes of the Christian world are turned towards you with admiration and rejoicing."

It is marvellous with what dexterity Dr. Laws finds everything to approve in churches outside of his own, and everything to condemn within the fold of which he is a minister. Everything true and right—everything lovely and of good report—belongs to the bodies in which he sits only by courtesy; everything that is false and evil is to be found in the church on whose rolls his name is found. A more singular case of studied disloyalty to the communion of which he is a minister and member, we have never seen or heard of.

It is a small matter comparatively to say that when Dr. Laws wrote the pamphlet which is so complete an indictment against the church to which he belongs, and so thorough an acquittal of all the churches which have separated from it, he was a member of the New York Gold Room. Yet it adds very much to the singularity of this plea for the "spiritual," and this condemnation of the least taint of the "secular" in the acts of the church, that it should come from that quarter. Without at all condemning Dr. Laws for his daily employment, or affirming that his presence there was inconsistent with his calling as a minister of Christ, we are very clear in the conviction that the fact should have imposed silence upon him in the controversies of the church.

[*From the Old School Presbyterian, January* 24, 1873.]

WILL NOT GIVE HIM A HEARING.

The Philadelphia *Presbyterian* recently made a savage onslaught on Dr. Laws for his "Letter to the Synod of Missouri." We referred to it two or three weeks ago. It did not claim to be an attempt to answer the Doctor's argument. It was not a courteous dissent from his unexceptionably expressed positions. It was a virulent personal assault—terribly abusive.

Dr. Laws has prepared a defence of himself and requested its insertion in the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*. This very reasonable request has been curtly refused and for very insufficient reasons. One reason is that Dr. Laws' reply is so long: another is, that it is taken up with bitter denunciation of the editor who vilified him.

Fair minded men will not form a very favorable idea of the editor who uses his position to assail mercilessly a Christian gentleman, and then declines to give that gentleman a hearing in his own defense, for reasons puerile and exaggerated. And those who read that merciless assault will be amazed (or not amazed?) that said editor further justifies his refusal to publish Dr. Laws' defense, on the ground that his "controversy

with Dr. Laws is not a personal one"! Pray, what is it then? What did the Philadelphia editor say, *in reply to Dr. Laws' Letter* but that Dr. Laws is a minister without charge, a "secularized" minister, "a member of the New York Gold Room," who therefore, was presumptuous, impertinent, to speak of the Church as he did? This strikes us as—just a little—personal.

REV. DR. LAWS.— * * The *Philadelphia Presbyterian* while refusing to publish the reply of Dr. Laws to its assault upon him, proceeded at the same time to make an extended comment on the suppressed article! Such an idea of fair play we hope does not widely prevail among the editorial fraternity.

Central Presbyterian, Richmond, Va.

[The ANSWER of "Dr. Laws," which was SUPPRESSED by *The Presbyterian.*]

For The Presbyterian.

"MISSOURI AND NEW YORK."

DR. LAWS' REPLY.

"Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you!"—Luke vi: 26.

MR. EDITOR:—The reason of this communication is to be found wholly in this one fact, viz.: That the leading *Editorial* of *The Presbyterian*, Dec. 21, 1872, a column and a half in length, under the above heading, devotes *an entire column* to "Dr. Laws."

The word "Missouri" of this caption covers a half column in defense of its St. Louis correspondent "N." against a criticism of the *St. Louis Presbyterian* to the effect that "N." had travestied the state of affairs in the Synod of Missouri, (O. S.) and the motives prompting its late action on ecclesiastical relations; the said correspondence and the defense being both understood and appreciated in that quarter as attempts to scatter apples of discord in the midst of the brethren of that Synod and also of its present movements for more intimate relations with other ecclesiastical bodies. "Blessed are the peace makers; for they shall be called the children of God." The able editor of the *St. Louis Presbyterian* who, by the way, is a working *pastor*, is certainly entitled to be esteemed by the public when speaking of the internal affairs of his own Synod, with which no one can be better acquainted, as entitled to higher confidence and respect than the effusion of any anonymous and unfriendly correspondent of *The Philadelphia Presbyterian*. But that paper is abundantly competent to vindicate itself.

Borne along by the tempest of unfriendly passion stirred up by this controversy with another paper, *The Presbyterian* tacks about from West to East, heads to "New York," and boldly and desperately sets its beak *to run down Dr Laws*, at all hazards. His name had not so much as been alluded to in the discussion, and he was a mere spectator of the tournament. Why then should the lists be broken and a lance with envenomed point be laid in rest for him? Why should a thunder bolt from the angry clouds of blackened wrath that raved through the brain of this redoubtable champion of an *anonymous* correspondent in St. Louis, leap forth to smite down "Dr. Laws" in New York city? The answer is, because, forsooth, six weeks previously Dr. Laws had addressed a certain *Letter* to the Synod of Missouri which has found great favor there as well as elsewhere. *The Old School Presbyterian*, St. Louis, published that Letter as a supplement Nov. 8, 1872. It discusses avowedly in the true interests of *union*, the independent position and the ecclesiastical relations of that Synod, not a *dead* but a *living issue;* in fact the living issue of the hour amongst the Presbyterians of America.

So far as known, it is the only attempt as yet made to discuss this issue strictly in the light of the ethical, Scriptural, ecclesiastical and legal principles it so strikingly embodies, the history of the church scarcely affording a parallel instance. But independently of all comment, the collection of authentic facts and documents contained in that pamphlet of over one hundred pages, and which enable the reader to form his own opinion as he goes along, is really of great value and well worth having, and is not otherwise readily accessible even to ministers.

Query: In carnal warfare at sea, suppose the builder of a vessel to be run down, is it to be accepted as a necessary consequence that the vessel itself is run down? or if, on land, it is proposed to blow up and destroy a fort, whether built of mud or masonry, is it enough to blow up the man who built it? If so, then *The Presbyterian* has not rendered itself ridiculous in attempting to destroy this document by destroying the author and compiler of it. That *Letter* is entitled to stand upon its own merits were its authorship unknown.

"Truth crushed to earth will rise again;
"The eternal years of God are hers."

Whether this *Letter* to the Synod of Missouri, which is declared to be the *occasion* of this attack is true or false, it is explicitly said, "we do not now intend to examine." Perhaps such examination would have been the wiser course. What *The Presbyterian* sets before the eyes of all its readers under such an imposing caption and with so much prominence, does not pretend, therefore, to be an answer to the *Letter*, as it certainly is not in fact, but it is an avowed personal assault with the manifest purpose of destroying the influence of the *Letter* by destroying its author. The principle of the argument is precisely that of the supercilious and arrogant Pharisees in

dealing with a poor man who bore a truthful and important testimony on a subject of great consequence even to *them* and of which he had some knowledge; but his testimony being distasteful to them, they vainly attempted to squelch it in the following summary way: "They (the Pharisees who were then in a majority in the synagogue and carried things with a high hand) answered and said unto him, *Thou wast altogether born in sins, and dost thou teach us?* And they cast him out." Jno. ix. The Presbyterian church has suffered enough from this sort of thing for a check to be put upon it. This style is not altogether suited, in this age, to either individuals or church courts.

Had the strictures referred to, however severe, been confined to the *Letter* itself, they would have elicited no answer from me, for I can well afford, as will more fully appear, to leave *it* to take care of itself. But the editorial in question is so completely saturated and surcharged with offensive personality as to make an answer, *in self defence*, a plain duty, however disagreeable it may be. I shall endeavor not to follow the bad example set before me, but to bear in mind the injunctions of that sacred Book which we both profess to receive and to preach to others as an authoritative *rule of action:* "Be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing."

It ought to startle somewhat the readers of *The Presbyterian*, who are accustomed to peruse its original matter with some measure of respect and confidence, to be assured, positively, that *there is not a single allegation or charge against Dr. Laws*, in the lengthy *Editorial* in question, *that is not false. Not one.* From the first to the last, from the egg to the apple of this feast of editorial abuse, whoever may be responsible for it, it is an unmitigated tissue of misrepresentation. It all hangs on the brittle thread of an *if:*—"IF the reports which have reached us are correct." Truly is it oft repeated by Shakespeare that "*if*" is a philosopher—a great philosopher; and a deceitful and licentious jugglery of that particle may transmute angels into demons and the ministers of Satan into apostles of light. Who may not be thus traduced? To the extent that this *Editorial* represents any reports respecting Dr. Laws, or his Letter, they are *not* "correct;" and a very little trouble would have established their falsity and saved this unseemly editorial exhibition.

To notice some of the particulars:

1. The "daily business" of Dr. Laws does *not* "lead him to Wall Street," as is therein so pompously proclaimed to the world for its enlightenment and his disgrace. *The Presbyterian* ought to be better informed on what it speaks of so oracularly. And yet, the daily business of others, Christian men, too, as good as either Dr. Laws or his accuser, does lead them there and even into the "purlieus" of the Gold and Stock Exchanges, which organizations, at this great centre of the financial world, are now just as necessary as church organizations are in the

religious world. Business men who understand these matters, look on preachers who abuse these organizations and the men who do business in them and then come to their offices with bland countenances, soliciting pecuniary aid for church enterprises with about the same amiability as preachers look on worldlings who, whilst enjoying its blessings, yet in the excess of their blind and indiscriminate prejudice, abuse the church and its members. "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from the Evil."

2. Again: This remarkable *Editorial* says; "We do not reproach Dr. Laws for seeking a livelihood by secular pursuits which are honest and lawful." For what, then, does it reproach him? If it is meant to be insinuated, as it certainly seems to be, that he is not only engaged in "secular pursuits," but in those which are not "honest and lawful," the suggestion is *atrocious*. The fact is, he does not seek, and (in the good providence of God,) he has no occasion "for seeking a livelihood by secular pursuits" of any kind, nor by any other kind of pursuits, whether in Wall street or elsewhere, whether in the ministry or out of it, whether in the church, or out of it. He neither entered the church nor the ministry, nor has he continued in either, nor ever Demas-like forsaken either for *bread and butter considerations;* but, with a noted example before him, of one whose enemies and traducers (ministers, too, in the church) sought to destroy his influence by holding *him* up to ridicule and contempt, Dr. Laws makes bold to affirm, and if need be, to challenge the disproof of it, that he has suffered and sacrificed more for the sake of his ministry than any man who dares to stand forth as his accuser. Sooner than compromise his integrity and sacred rights as a minister of the church of Christ, and "drag its white robes in the mire of party politics," he willingly endured imprisonments, banishment, exile, sickness and sufferings,* from which, as a relief, death would have been hailed by him, (as it was by his beloved spiritual father, Dr Potts,) as "*the most joyful news of his life!*"—"I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me, for I ought to have been commended of you." I am profoundly conscious of my own unworthiness; but I cannot be insensible to the deep wrong that is attempted to be done me.

In vindication of himself against every representation or insinuation made covertly or openly, to his injury or prejudice as a man or as a minister, by associating his name with any business transaction, enterprise, organization or association, in New York or elsewhere, before he entered the ministry, or since, Dr. Laws *fearlessly* challenges investigation. Allow the remark that Dr. Laws, whilst for many years President of the Synodical College of Missouri, and dis-

* Brought on me by the damp, exposure and ill fare of the prisons; and these excruciating rheumatic tortures continued to gnaw into my very bones for about two years.

charging the duties of his Chair, that of "*Metaphysics and Sacred Literature*," acting as chaplain and preaching constantly, managed, at the same time, the entire financial affairs of that institution. His busines experience, whether in his own behalf or in behalf of the church, whether previous to that or since, has been attended with success: and he may be excused for saying that he feels a conscious pride in the *spotless record* that he has left in business circles.

3. Again: "Dr. Laws, if the reports which have reached us are correct, has laid aside entirely his ministerial functions." "IF" is *surely* a philosopher. Dr Laws is happy to inform you once more, that your "reports" are *not* "correct;" that he has *not*, as is here so injuriously asserted, done any such thing; and that he has no idea of so doing; but that, on the contrary, he exercises those functions as opportunity, or occasion offers. Many of your readers need not to be told this. He conceives that he has his own appointed work to do, and has sought quietly to attend to his own business in such a way as to give a good account to the Master, and to be no hindrance to others in doing the same. If he had a tithe of the vain ambition to appear before the public, often misnamed a desire of usefulness which seems to actuate some others, perhaps more, and more correct information might be reported of him. Men who are given to much talking, sometimes make a great mistake when they suppose that they do all the *thinking* as well; and that by their much talking and writing, they acquire a sort of prescriptive right to do it *all*. Those who "abide in quietness during many years" often have more real reason to speak than the noisy ones; and the prisoner at the bar, heavily indicted both *for keeping quiet and for speaking*, pleads ignorance, and throws himself on the mercy of the court, solemnly averring that he was not aware that any minister or member of the Presbyterian church, did, by keeping his mouth closed during a protracted and heated contest, till all others had had the floor, thereby forfeit all right to be heard upon the subject, and incur the penalty of ostracism for having had the temerity and presumption to entertain and to utter views at variance with those of the majority in his synagogue. "And they cast him out" from the synagogue, which had 'sheltered the accuser,' and, 'kept his name upon her rolls.' Perhaps there were those around, of like passions, who said: "They *served him right*."

Beg pardon, Mr. Editor; but if the question of *secularisation* is to receive *general* discussion, this editorial being only an entrance upon it, there is a point that should not be overlooked. On the roll of the General Assembly our Dr Grier appears thus: "Matthew B. Grier, D. D., Editor." That is all; he is not even an ordinary "W. C." and does not appear as exercising any ministerial functions whatever. Where is the Scriptural or constitutional warrant for "*Editor*" as a presbyter and an or-

dained functionary of the church? What has custom or sufferance to do with the matter?

"Mr. Editor" lives in a glass house, and is enrolled as a *secularised minister*. And it does occur whether any "Mr. Editor," who could so far forget himself as to perpetrate such an offense against the rules of public discussion, and of genteel journalism as is exhibited in this abusive *Editorial*, ought not seriously to consider the propriety and duty of laying aside entirely, all claim to something more than his ministerial functions? Thank thee for the words: "We do not sit in judgment on [Mr. Editor,] for ceasing to make the ministry a great business. To his own Master he stands or falls. We do not reproach him for seeking a livelihood by secular pursuits which are honest and lawful. We determine nothing as to his duty, and will not measure his responsibilities." But, perhaps "*editor*" comes under the head of "teacher;" then, in the present instance, at least, to the Litany for relief: From *all such*,

"*Good Lord, deliver us.*

"From all blindness of heart; from pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy: from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness,

"*Good Lord, deliver us.*"

If you will turn back to the file of *The Presbyterian* for March, 1872, you will find a communication under the caption "W. C." and signed W. C. It is believed that it *first* published the suggestion of abating the evil of "W. C.s" by means of some general intermediary of intelligence between them and the vacant churches,—an *idea* that subsequently attracted some attention in the papers, Presbytery and Assembly. That communication was written by "Dr. Laws" and you are now requested to republish it over his proper signature as subscribed hereto.

The General Assembly, 1802, "Resolved that if any minister, *by providential circumstances*, becomes incapable of exercising his ministerial functions, the Presbytery are to inspect his conduct, that he do not neglect his ministerial duties, beyond what his circumstances render unavoidable." "From this position the Assembly, in both its forms, has never deviated." At the regular meeting of the Presbytery last spring, the usual time, the statement of Dr. Laws, with that of others was made to his Presbytery and passed upon. Conceding that Dr. Laws deserved to be called to account, as to the exercise of his ministerial functions, yet by fitly applying an epithet unhesitatingly applied to him by *The Presbyterian*, it may be asked, has *it* not, in assuming to itself this task, been guilty of "*impertinence?*"

4. "And what shall I say more?" This *Editorial* exults in its work. Dr. Laws is misrepresented, caricatured, derided and burlesqued by being depicted in ridiculous attitudes, and placed in false relations, of course, most fraternally. The stunning influence of certain tremendous

names is as freely invoked as if there was given by these gentlemen an open policy for so doing, in order to overshadow and overwhelm, as if by their sanction the devoted object of this wrathful vituperation,—but the opinion is ventured that these deservedly eminent divines could not have regarded it otherwise than as an unwarrantable liberty, to attempt to prop up with their names the dignity and propriety of an unmanly and discreditable diatribe of personal abuse. In the face of fact; and in contradiction of abounding evidence in its own columns, this *Editorial* represents that "the only voice now heard" against obstacles in the way, *not* of a conglomeration, but, as is set forth in that *Letter*, of a *true union* on principle, is "the voice of one crying in the wilderness of New York," from the midst of the "purlieus" of its business circles, whence this "*Jupiter tonans*" decrees that a prophet from the Lord "must not come." Poor Nazareth! the glory of thy degradation has departed. Were it true that the voice of Dr. Laws is *the only one* raised against the errors in question, it would be his *honor*, let that voice issue whence it might; but it is not true. Neither is it true that Dr. Laws has represented that the church "has altogether gone astray;" nor has he reproached his Presbytery or any of its members, with "secularities" and "political contentions." The controversy is with our General Assembly's deliverances, and to which his Presbytery has not given adhesion. The error of this *Editorial*, both as to its matter and spirit, as to the *Letter* and its author, is congenital and inwrought into its entire warp and woof. By allowing much of it to pass unnoticed, there is some solace in the reflection that certain poisons are sometimes given in such doses as prove their own antidotes, *no thanks* to the unskilful administrator in whose blundering ignorance there is no more safety, than in a vicious purpose to destroy life.

5. It must not be overlooked that the stereotyped offer of a certain class of newspaper writers, is couched in the usual form, to wit: "If we have been misinformed, and have done him injustice in saying this, we will be most happy to correct it." Ordinarily the public does not need information as to the happiness of the writers of such *Editorials* in correcting their mistakes. They are seldom known to be wrong, in their own opinion; and of course they have the last word, and any attempt to set them right is made at great disadvantage, unless it be by other Editors of like privileges with themselves. It should rather be an Editor's happiness, one would think, not to need correction. But what is the virtue or the value of such an assurance as this? Let this set phrase be viewed in connection with the circumstances, manner, matter and spirit of the performance over which it is spread, as a thin and feeble excuse, and then let it pass for just what it is worth.

The following incident occurred in Missouri during the late war. A band of reckless soldiers fired on a man peacefully and quietly attending

to his own appropriate business whilst following his plow in the field, broke his leg and otherwise injured him. On going up to him, and finding that he was not the man they had supposed—*that they had acted on incorrect information*—why, they begged his pardon and expressed their regret! This was more like a mockery than an atonement for the injury. Such conduct was inexcusable. A very little trouble and that without any great inconvenience or the slightest risk, would have corrected the false and injurious impression on which they so wickedly acted. Every right-minded person must condemn such conduct. But *character* is of more value than bodily limbs or life itself; and society will ever adjudge that man who wantonly attacks and attempts to destroy it, as the worst of assassins. Business men soon become familiarised, and no public man is excusable for not being acquainted with this one of the elementary rules of evidence, viz.: that every case held up for judgment must be sustained by the best evidence of which the nature of the case will admit; and hence with scarcely an exception, *hearsay* is excluded as utterly unreliable, even under oath, when the rights and interests of a fellow man are at stake. The lawyer who should venture to ignore this inexorable rule of fair dealing and justice in the practice of his profession, would inevitably disgrace himself with his professional brethren and likewise in the eye of the court and before the public. There is wonderful appositeness in our Saviour's instructions which it may be well to lay to heart: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? * * Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Matt. vii., 1–3. 5. When Job's friends who, with a false theory of his case, misjudged God's sore providences towards him of which they had personal knowledge and undertook to make him out, whilst still in the midst of his afflictions and on that very account, a worse man than his neighbors, he felt in his soul that it was not true, and hence he stoutly and brusquely repelled their foolish and false representations, thus: "And Job answered and said, No doubt but ye are the people, and wisdom shall die with you!" * * "What ye know the same do I know also: I am not inferior unto you. Surely I would speak to the Almighty, and I desire to reason with God. But ye are forgers of lies, ye are all physicians of no value. Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace, and it should be your wisdom." Job xii., 1–2; xiii., 2–5. But the same man who could thus protest his integrity in the presence of his fellow men, when he lifted his eyes heavenward, was humbled into the dust: "Now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore, I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes."

6. Special attention is asked to two more characteristic passages from this *Editorial*. One is in these words: "But when a secularised minister steps forth to *defame the church* which gives him the minister's name, and *heaps words of reproach upon the men* who are his peers, *that he may thus lengthen out the day of strife and division*, we tell him that from him at least all such words are an *impertinence* which all good men can afford to pass unanswered." (The *italics* are mine.) Those who have read this remarkable *Editorial* of Dec. 21st, 1872, will not fail to recall that this is rather a mild specimen of its unamiable spirit, harsh utterances and words of contempt and scorn.

The gravity of the charge here so overbearingly made consists chiefly in this, that Dr. Laws is held up as *a defamer of the church*. Mr. Editor, his *Letter* is in your hands; it is, also, in the hands of thousands, many of whom are readers of *The Presbyterian*. He makes a *demand* of you, therefore, which the publishers of that paper and every reader of it in the world will recognise *his right* to make and *your imperative obligation* to answer. That demand is this: *That you either make good this offensive accusation or retract it*, at the *peril* of being yourself branded a *slanderer*.

This is a perfectly simple, reasonable issue. The *Letter* is in your hands, and is the sole ground on which this heavy indictment is based. Is that published *Letter* such as to fix on him the stigma of defaming the Presbyterian church? If not, then this *Editorial* is such as to brand its author a slanderer. Dr. Laws is no novice, no upstart in his ecclesiastical relations. He is a member of the Presbyterian church of about 30 years' standing and an ordained minister in it of more than 20 years' standing. He originally united with Dr. W. S. Potts' church, St. Louis, Mo., in the spring of 1843; and was ordained and installed pastor of one of the churches of St. Louis, in the fall of 1851, by "the original Presbytery" of St. Louis, of the Old School Synod of Missouri, with which Synod, therefore, he was more or less intimately connected for about 25 years, so that he needed no introduction in that quarter: and no apology for addressing the *Letter* as he did, seems to have been required beyond that given (p. 77), and so far as heard from, so cordially accepted. But he is egregriously mistaken if any part of the Presbyterian church will accord to you or any other man, in such a case of character as this specific issue involves, the arrogant prerogative of a Pythagorean *Ipse dixit*. To the *proof*: and let there be no *garbling*, nor unfair dealing with it.*

Please make good, also, the charge of casting "*reproach*." He had supposed himself innocent of doing so, having conscientiously endeavored

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* See page 111 for the "Editor's" covert attempt but disgraceful failure (in his comment on this *suppressed* answer,) to make good his infamous accusation.

to speak only the words of truth and soberness, without prejudice and with perfect fairness and candor, consulting neither fear nor favor.

The *assertion*, that Dr. Laws made in his *Letter* a "public attack on the church," is hardly worth notice, as it is equally destitute of proof, adduced or adduceable. On the contrary, the church, to the best of his ability, is *defended* by him, the thing attacked being an *error*, and with the view of its overthrow and eradication. You had just as well charge the physician who attacks a dangerous *disease* in your system with attacking yourself. The right of free discussion, the right of canvassing the acts of church courts, even the highest, cannot be denied, no, not even to the humblest layman, though his daily business should lead him to Wall Street.

Taken in connection with other things in this *Editorial* the imputation to Dr. Laws of a purpose, "to lengthen out the day of strife and division," verily seems to entitle him to an interest in the 9th Beatitude: "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake." Matt. v: ii. [See *Letter* pp. 31, 42, 43, 44, 73-5, (Res. 2 & 3,) 81, 83, 84, 85.]

7. The other passage now claims attention. It is narrated *as fact* that "The moment there appears to be a possibility that the Synod of Missouri will enter into negotiations with the Assembly, * he (Dr. Laws) rouses from his quietude, hies to Missouri, arrives too late to make the speech which he has prepared, but publishes it in twenty mortal columns of a newspaper, &c." Well, well, this is awful! For accuracy this is a specimen.

Now, what are the facts? *As a matter of fact*, Dr. Laws was present at the opening of Synod and remained till after its close. In the minutes of the Synod, published weeks since in one of the exchanges of *The Presbyterian*, his name appears amongst those invited to sit as corresponding members. *As a matter of fact*, therefore, he was present, *with the privileges of the floor*, at every action taken by the Synod on ecclesiastical relations, and of his own choice "abode in quietness," not opening his lips. *As a matter of fact*, the Synod entered as fully into negotiations with *our* General Assembly as Dr. Dickson asked, and Dr. Laws' *Letter* gives a full and fair account of all that was done in that respect. *As a matter of fact*, the *Letter* was *not* "prepared" before going to Missouri; nor did he go to that state for any purpose connected with it, but for domestic reasons, and with no expectation then, of attending Synod, as is stated at the very opening of the *Letter*. *Who could have been the "correct" informant relied on in this case?* And yet *The Presbyterian* has been made by this writer to serve its readers *in a leading Editorial*, with this absurd piece of *romancing* in making out a case against a fellow presbyter in whom all *confidence*, and for whom all respect are to be *destroyed*. On whose *head*, as a matter of fact, should the *fool's cap* be placed? and at

whom should the finger of scorn be pointed? Perhaps *The Philadelphia Presbyterian* "*can afford*" to give currency to such stuff as this to serve a purpose; but it may be doubted if its patrons are willing to pay for being so unscrupulously imposed on.

What this *romancing Editorial* says about "the unclean pile" and the "uncovering of a mother's shame in the midst of strangers," is as gross as it is groundless. It is perfectly original, the creation of *his own* imagination. Those who have not read the *Letter* are positively assured that *it* is *not* in any manner responsible for the chasteness or decency of this imagery.

True to his instincts of perfect and untrameled originality, soaring above the common herd and in contempt of common-place facts, the writer of this *Editorial* coruscation of fluorescent genius, says that the Letter of Dr. Laws filled "*twenty mortal columns* of a newspaper." This instance of inaccuracy is quite remarkable, in this, that the writer not only misstates, but absolutely *understates* the fact. The *Letter* filled considerably *more* than "twenty" columns. But it is asked in all courtesy, whether the writer would not have done a more handsome thing, if he had, instead of pronouncing those columns "*mortal*," pronounced them *immortal?* Why so cruel? Is not that a point on which, about the holidays, a little sensitiveness and exuberant and pleasing anticipation of the future, might have been charitably spared from such a cold and frosty *nip?*—"the most unkindest cut of all."

8. In conclusion it is proposed to submit the views of some other parties, entitled to respect and confidence, that the reader may judge of the justness and propriety of a paper like *The Presbyterian*, allowing an article to go forth to the world in its columns such as that *Editorial leader* of Dec. 21, 1872, for the avowed purpose of breaking down a minister of the church for the sole offense of being the author of the *Letter* spoken of in the following extracts. Only brief samples are given.

1. *The North Carolina Presbyterian* in the course of a notice of about a column, says, * * "It (the *Letter*) is an elaborate and careful exhibit of the causes which led to the isolated posture of the Synod of Missouri, and a masterly vindication of the action of the Synod in the controversey forced upon it by the Northern Assembly [O. S.] It contradicts by a process of evidence—an array of facts which is indisputable and on record—the charge of revolutionary and schismatic movement which some have brought against the Synod, and shows that the sentiments of that body, upon which their action was grounded, were clearly consistent with the standards of the Presbyterian Church. The agitation of past issues is never fruitful of profitable results, unless the circumstances clearly justify it. It is better in the main to let old matters of difference alone. But there are occasions when bold, candid, outspoken words are necessary to be uttered for the truth's sake. Such an occasion was

present when the Assembly of the Northern Church approached the Synod of Missouri, and such words Dr. Laws has spoken. * * * *

"The *Letter* is, in some respects, a singular production, but it is an able one; and as it involves matters that reach widely in more directions than one, we join with the *Old School Presbyterian* in the hope "that both our friends and our opponents will give it a careful and impartial reading."

It was from this notice, the reader will observe, that the writer of *The Philadelphia Presbyterian* editorial picked up a fragment of a clause—"*The Letter* is, in some respects, a singular production"—and pressed it into a service, as the hinge on which to swing back and forth, such as must have been utterly repugnant to the mind of its author; and that, too, without any notice to the reader that he was serving a hostile purpose in a wrested fragment of the livery of friendship. Dr. Laws had not seen the N. C. Presb. when he first stumbled on The Philadelphia Presbyterian of Dec. 21, and until he found it, he had an utterly false impression on his mind in regard to it; others may also have been misled

2. *The Memphis Presbyterian*, in the course of a notice of over a column says: "It is beyond our power to review it, (the *Letter*) closely at this time. Dr. Laws has certainly done himself no discredit by this production. It is the product of a master hand, and will command respect wherever read by unprejudiced minds. * * * We commend it to the earnest study of all into whose hands it may fall."

3. *The Earnest Worker*, a Sabbath School and family paper issued by the "Committee of Publication," of the Southern Presbyterian Assembly, and edited by its widely-known Secretary, a man of great ability and experience as an editor, in a notice of about two columns, says: "We have read this pamphlet with a great deal of interest. * * * In it (the 1st part), he ably and conclusively vindicates the course of the Synod, in its dealings with that body [The Assembly O. S.]. The 2d part is a review of the present position of the Synod, and of the course which it should pursue with reference to its future relations. In this part of his letter, Dr. Laws has occasion to speak of our church. * * In this portion of his discussion the Dr. is candid and just. * *

"The letter of Dr. Laws is able, the discussion well sustained, the positions fortified by voluminous reference, and it will well repay a perusal by any one who feels an interest in the subject. Dr. Laws favors a union between our church and the Reformed church in America, and gives interesting historical facts bearing on the subject."

4. Two other states are represented by the two following testimonials from parties recognised as entitled to the very highest consideration. One of them says: "Your very able and lucid letter (in pamphlet form)

to the Synod of Missouri has been received, for which I thank you. I doubt not it will do much good." The other speaks thus: "I have just arisen from the perusal of your *Letter* to the Synod of Missouri, as it appears in the O. S. Presbyterian. I will send a few lines if it only be to say, well done, *thank you.*

"A great danger to the truth all the time, lies just here; mankind are so prone to let fundamentals slip, to allow the record of principle to be covered up with the rags of sickly sentiment. * * * Your trumpet gives no uncertain sound. He who can, (after your paper is studied) fail to see the vital distinction between the doctrines and principles of one Assembly and another, must be hard of seeing or hard of something else. I regret that the Edition of your *Letter* is so small. I would like a statement so plain to be placed in the hand of every minister and every elder throughout the whole country."

5. To these will be added some brief extracts from *The Old School Presbyterian*, St. Louis, Mo., the organ of the Synod to which *The Letter* was addressed. It says: "Dr. Laws ably reviews the controversy, not only vindicating the Synod completely, but also demonstrating that the Assembly, in the days of wild excitement, proceeded unscripturally and contrary to the law of the church, and (which is of vastly more serious moment) has, in these calmer times, persisted in and defended its wrong doing, hedging it securely with ecclesiastical and civil sanctions.

"The spirit of this Letter, its manner of speech, is unexceptionable as its matter is unanswerable. The Doctor exemplifies *Suaviter in modo, fortiter in re.*"

It says again: "He (an exchange) could not have read the Letter of which he speaks so flippantly and incorrectly."* * *

"We just as positively *deny* * * that his (Dr. Laws') object is to refresh the animosities of the past, and render a reconciliation with the General Assembly impossible. On the contrary, Dr. Laws is carefully courteous and *clearly points out the only way by which reconciliation between this Synod and the Northern Assembly can be effected.* This he does by showing how and by whom the variance is perpetuated."

A communication to the *O. S. Presbyterian* says: * * "It is so clear, so candid and so respectful and so luminous a summing up of the whole matter, &c."

6. *The St. Louis Christian Advocate*, a leading paper of another denomination, whose editor is one of the ablest and best known men of his powerful church, speaks as follows:—

"The spirit and manner of the *Letter* are those of a high toned Christian gentleman, such as Dr. Laws is known to be.

"All interested in the controversy, and especially all Presbyterians, will do well to give this *Letter* a careful reading."

7. I feel constrained to add the following testimonial from the pen of a venerable layman, fully 60 years of age, who has been a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church as long as I have been a member of it, and who has often taken a prominent part in all the courts of the church from the Session to the General Assembly,—a man who has been all his life a lawyer by profession and who has with honor worn the judicial ermine, and whose exalted personal worth and professional ability and integrity entitle his opinion to a consideration amongst Presbyterians second to that of no man in America. I here give only extracts but shall, in another connection, have use for this testimonial in full over the name of the distinguished author. He (Judge Wm. T. Wood, now of Lexington, Missouri,) says:

"I have again read your letter addressed to the Synod of Missouri, and with much care, and am more than ever heretofore impressed with its value, not only because of the truth and accuracy of its statements of the matters involved in the issues between the General Assembly (O. S.) and our Synod, but because also of the fact that the real, true and great principles involved, have been distinctly and plainly developed and stated, and discussed with so much of fairness, and at the same time with a clearness and ability that will leave no honest, candid, and intelligent Presbyterian an excuse for ignorance as to the true causes of the attitude and state of our Synod. * * *

"Your letter with a logic unanswerable has asserted and vindicated these principles, so that not a word is needed from any quarter for their support. The resolutions you recommended, at the close of your letter in the scheme you present, from 1 to 6 inclusive (pp. 74–75) embrace substantially all the grounds and questions of difference between our Synod and the General Assembly.

"It gives me great pleasure, to say that I most cordially and fully approve your views and positions, as to the true law of the civil cases, you refer to as having been decided in Missouri and Kentucky and Pennsylvania, and by the Supreme Court of the United States. The law, as decided by the Supreme Court of the U. S., is not sound law, and as laid down by Justice Miller, will not I think be again affirmed by that or any other able Court. That decision resulted from a want of proper knowledge, in the Court, of Church, organization and Government. These cases however you have handled so well, so justly and ably, that I am more than content with what you have said, and will fearlessly invite the criticism of lawyers, feeling sure that your views and positions as to these cases, will have the approval and concurrence of the learned of the profession. * * *

"I will now only add, the expression of a wish that your *Letter* may be printed and published in some more durable form."

8. Finally, *The Philadelphia Presbyterian* says: "His pamphlet is simply

a frantic effort," &c. "All such words are an impertinence which all good men can afford to pass unanswered." &c., &c.

This flippant and futile attempt to laugh such a *Letter* to scorn absolutely beggars comment.

——Ye gods, it doth amaze me,
A man of such feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world
And bear the palm alone.
* * * * * * *
Now in the names of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed
That he is grown so great?

It is useless to make any apology for the length of this communication, as the writer would most willingly have been spared the occasion and trouble of it altogether. He reflected beforehand with the utmost seriousness on the duty imposed upon him to avoid in his manner of presenting it all possible grounds of offense. Hence, he has only held up the mirror to the *Editorial* itself and there has been an endeavor to make no forced constructions and to be just and candid in whatever was said, and temperate and free from petulance and as unobtrusive of self as a personal defence rendered possible, with no desire to triumph or to unduly press any advantage, beyond what the proprieties of the occasion rendered becoming and imperative. It is certainly a more humane and a more Godlike act to reach down and in unmistakeable kindness offer to lift up one supposed to be erring, than, with a will, to take advantage of the terrible enginery of a misguided press to trample such an one in the mire. No just and true man could find any satisfaction in fighting against the truth and all the more noble instincts of his nature by persisting in such a course. Every ingenuous mind feels a relief in being delivered from error even if it be "so as by fire." Such a saving may be considered a "contrariwise blessing."

Mr. Editor, if hereafter you wish any additional information first hand and on which you can rely, in regard to "Dr. Laws," it will be most cheerfully and fully given; and you are invited to his residence, where you will find a prophet's chamber and hospitable entertainment, so long as you may wish to pursue your original investigations. He harbors not the slightest ill will; and if the church and the public will forgive, he does so most freely. He can also forgive others. It was a serious error, it is true, but it is human to err. We all make mistakes and so does the church itself, sometimes, you know. But one may, on recovering from an error, like Peter, be stronger than before. "When thou art converted, strengthen thy brethern." There may be a blessing for both in this occurrence—it certainly takes the "woe" off of your humble servant.

Allow me to wish you *a Happy New Year*,

New York, 145 East 27th St.,
December 31st, 1872.

Fraternally,
SAMUEL S. LAWS.

[*From the Philadelphia Presbyterian, Jan.* 25, 1873.]

Dr. LAWS' CORRECTION.

"*Messrs. Editors*,—In an editorial of the *Presbyterian*, December 21, 1872, is found the following language, to-wit:—'Dr. Laws, if the reports which have reached us are correct, has laid aside entirely his ministerial functions. His daily business leads him to Wall street.' And again, 'Dr. Laws is, in the complete sense of the term, a secularized minister' . . 'seeking a livelihood by secular pursuits.' In the *Presbyterian* of the 18th inst. Dr. Laws is represented as 'deeply immersed in secular pursuits in the city of New York, and it is observed, 'We are very clear in the conviction that the fact (of his being thus occupied) should have imposed silence upon him in the controversies of the Church.'

"To the public as well as to myself this assurance is given, 'If we have been misinformed, and have done him injustice in saying this, we will be most happy to correct it.'

Messrs. Editors, you 'have been misinformed, and have done him injustice in saying this.' 'The reports which have reached you are *not* correct.' They are wholly at fault. 'Dr. Laws does *not* seek a livelihood by secular pursuits of any kind; his daily business most certainly does *not* lead him to Wall street. 'The fact' is he is *not* immersed in secular pursuits in the city of New York at all, nor elsewhere; and still farther, he has *not* laid aside his ministerial functions, and has no idea of doing so, although from no fault or preference of his own, he has been for some time so situated '*by providential circumstances*' as to have had very limited occasion or opportunity for their exercise. He had good and controlling reasons for coming to New York when he did, and has not yet had any sufficient providential indications for leaving it.

"In this week's issue of the *Presbyterian*, (the 18th inst.) it is said, 'Our controversy with Dr. Laws is not a personal one. We have no reason to doubt that he has discharged the offices conferred on him, either by State or Church, well.'

"'Dr. Laws assures you that he never, in all his life, held an office of any kind from the State, nor took any part in politics; he feels called on in this connection to correct mistakes in regard to himself personally, but not to defend his letter." [*However, he would be pleased to submit the following testimonials of other parties in regard to this* Letter *or Pamphlet, which the New York Presbytery has regarded of so much importance as to appoint a Committee of five to report upon it.** * * * *]

We cheerfully publish the statement from Dr. Laws which is given above, though it conflicts with information given us. Our statements that Dr. Laws was engaged in secular business in the city of New York, and that his daily business "led him to Wall street," were founded on the following facts communicated to us, which we believe are entirely trustworthy: A printed list of the members of the Gold Exchange of New York (published June, 1866,) shows that Samuel S. Laws was then a member of the Gold Board, having his office at No. 22 Pine street.

A list of the members of the Open Board of Stock Brokers of New

* This entire sentence in the brackets, and the testimonials following it, (which were the same, excepting that from *The Presbyterian* itself, as those in my suppressed *Reply* (pp. 23–26) were omitted by the "Editor" on his own responsibility. The quotation marks in which it will be observed that my "Correction" is set, is no proper nor sufficient notice of the Editorial *liberty* thus taken with my communication. There are some other changes of no importance, such as "Mr. Editor," to "Messrs. Editors," and a disregard of some underscoring and quotation marks.

York (published in the same volume,) shows that he was also then a member of this Board, having his office at 27 Wall street, New York.

A list of the bankers and brokers in New York, published in the *Merchant's and Banker's Almanac*, January, 1871, shows that he was then a member of both the Gold Exchange and the Stock Exchange.

An inquiry, made on the 9th inst., at the rooms of the Gold Board New York reveals the fact that he sold his seat in that board on or about the 18th of December, 1872.

It will be noticed that Dr. Laws' "Correction" is written in the present tense. It implies, we presume, that Dr. Laws has withdrawn from the secular pursuits in which he was at one time engaged. But while we are very willing to accept Dr. Laws' testimony as to this fact, it does not alter the state of facts as they were when he wrote his "Letter to the Synod of Missouri," (Old-school.) Our criticisms of the latter were grounded on the fact that at the time he prepared and published that "Letter" his steps did lead him to Wall street, where he was a fortunate possessor of a seat at the Gold Board. He did not leave the Gold Room, if our information is correct, until after he had returned from his visit to the Synod of Missouri. We submit that no plea founded upon what he is *now* can avail to shield him from criticisms founded on what he was *then*. With this remark we dismiss the subject, so far as we are concerned, from our columns.

[*From the Philadelphia Presbyterian, Feb.* 8, 1873.]

DR. LAWS' STATEMENT.*

Messrs. Editors—In the *Presbyterian* of this week, January 25th, 1873, the following editorial statements are made, to wit:

"It will be noticed that Dr. Laws' correction is written in the present tense. . . . Our criticisms of the letter were grounded on the fact that at the time he prepared and published that 'Letter,' his steps did lead him to Wall street. . . . We submit that no plea founded upon what he is *now* can avail to shield him from criticisms founded on what he was *then*."

Will you allow "Dr. Laws" to state that, so far as business and secular pursuits are concerned, his position when he wrote that communication in the "present tense" was the same as when he wrote the letter to the Synod of Missouri, and also the same as it has been for several years. The supposed "fact" as to his daily occupation, on which the "criticisms were grounded," therefore, was an entire mistake. The use of the "present tense," to which attention is called, was, consequently, in no manner evasive, but wholly because the criticisms themselves were in that tense.

There are other and fresh errors of "information" in this issue which it is not deemed worth while to notice here. Dr. Laws still holds his ticket of membership in the New York Gold Exchange; at least, the party entrusted with his business has not yet reported to him the sale of

* This "Statement," it will be observed, was not published till after the meeting of The New York Presbytery given below.

it. [All Dr. Laws asks of *The Presbyterian* is that, if it has occasion to publish any statements about him personally, they be *truthful*.*]

If proper "inquiry" had been made, it would have been ascertained that Dr. Laws never was an active member of either of the Exchanges, and that his relations to both of them were formerly matters of importance by virtue of what, as he conceives, reflects on him great honor. Although he has been so quiet about it, nevertheless he is the inventor—the originator and introducer into the business circles of this city of that system of telegraphing now in operation in Europe as well as throughout the United States, which reports the fluctuations of the exchanges of the world in hundreds of business offices simultaneously. Since telegraphing took a practical shape in the hands of Morse, no application of electricity, except that of the Atlantic cable, has produced so great a sensation and revolution in the business circles of the world's great centres of trade, as this one originated by Dr. Laws. When he had, as an individual matter, carried it to the point of accepted success, he joined his interests with others, and withdrew all personal attention from it nearly four years since, to resume labors more congenial.

This wonderful scientific and mechanical contribution to the improvements of this age is historical; and it is of itself more than most men accomplish in life. The priority of Dr. Laws rests on voluminous evidence under oath. This is the special business that occupied him for several years in and about the exchanges of New York City, and a lack of acquaintance with this state of facts, explains the blundering and groping of the informants of the *Presbyterian*.

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* I was careful to retain an exact copy of the manuscript of the "Correction" as well as of the "Statement" sent to *The Presbyterian*. The *entire qualifying sentence* contained in these brackets was omitted by *The Presbyterian*. It is certain that no such omission would ever be made by a compositor or a proof reader unless the sentence had been erased, or authority for doing so had been given at head-quarters. There is a number of other unwarrantable changes, such as that of the address to "Messrs. Editors" from "Mr. Editor," the omission of quotation marks and a disregard of underscoring for *italics* to which no special importance attaches. But when a liberty is taken with the *text* of one's manuscript the case is very different; it is not then a matter of the printer's art. Of the three communications that were sent to *The Presbyterian* in the course of this controversy, the 1st, the "*Reply*," was wholly *suppressed* and the editor indulged in a column of comment on the suppressed article! The 2d, the "Correction," p. 128, was *suppressed in part*, less than half of it, or such part as the "Editor" chose to select, being published without any notice being given to the reader, but, on the contrary, a style of remark was assumed that implies great fairness. The 3d, this "Statement," was also changed by *striking out* this entire and most important sentence. Now, in reference to all this, I have two remarks to make: 1. Such editorial conduct is incompatible with fair-minded and honorable dealing; and 2d. A newspaper, whether religious or secular, edited in this style, is not entitled to any man's confidence. Who that reads *The Pres-*

byterian can say, in the face of such facts, that he has any assurance that the articles published therein are what the authors wrote, whose names attach to them? The man who is so destitute of a true sense of literary honor and honesty as to materially change a writer's manuscript without proper authority from him to do so, is as untrustworthy as a book-keeper who makes false entries in accounts. The man who alters my manuscript in defense of my character is as basely unscrupulous as he who forges or alters a note on my pocket. What I here say does not rest upon an "if my information be correct," but upon stubborn *facts* which this "editor" has put on record against himself. His case is not at all relieved by the following specimen of editorial consistency, which shows that this editor, at heart, is as really opposed to those *bellum* deliverances of the Assembly as my pamphlet, which he so savagely abuses and unconscionably misrepresents. This extract is taken from an *editorial* of *The Presbyterian* of July 13, 1872. If it was right in him (Dr. Grier,) to oppose these things where is the sin of my doing so?

He says:

"We agree that civil and ecclesiastical courts are all fallible, and have pronounced erroneous decisions. We are not, in any respect, followers of the Vatican Council, and do not believe in the infallibility either of priest or judge.

"We agree that by the principles of our national polity, Church and State, in our land, are separate and independent institutions. The courts of the Church have no jurisdiction in civil matters, and the courts of the State have no jurisdiction in things spiritual.

"We are willing further to agree with Dr. Junkin in saying that much of the action of the various General Assemblies out of which the lawsuits in Kentucky ultimately grew, was unwise, and in its results, very disastrous. The deliverances of the Assembly at Pittsburg in 1865 in reference to the Southern Presbyterian churches we have always regarded as most unfortunate and erroneous. We opposed this action privately with all our ability at the time it was taken, and afterwards in the *Presbyterian* argued against it with so much earnestness that it cost us quite a number of subscribers, especially in the region in which Dr. Junkin lives. The action of the Assembly of 1866, by which Dr. Stuart Robinson and Dr. S. R. Wilson were excluded from the Assembly of which they were members, before the appeal of Dr. Breckinridge was reached and decided, we have always believed to be contrary to the law of the Presbyterian church, and uncalled for in the circumstrnces of the case."

I now dismiss this newspaper controversy with the remark that whilst it was a personal assault that drew me into this defence, yet I have not pursued nor drawn to view this "editor" who made the attack, beyond the revelation he has made of himself in the columns of his own paper. I should not have engaged in this controversy, however, nor have published it, had I not been impelled by the conviction that interests of higher consequence were at stake than any of a merely personal character. In the vindication of truth the motto of the Order of the Thistle and of Scotland's banner may ever be unfurled—

Nemo me impune lacessit.

VII.

The New York Presbytery.

On January 6th, and February 3d, 1873, this Presbytery took the following actions relative to the Letter to the Synod of Mo.

"New York, Jan. 6, 1873.

"Messrs. Hatfield, Burchard, Conkling, Murray and Thomson were appointed a committee to inquire in regard to a certain pamphlet from the pen of Rev. S. S. Laws, a member of this Presbytery, reported as reflecting on the Presbyterian Church, to report and recommend what, if any action be required in the matter.

"A true extract from the Minutes,

"S. D. ALEXANDER,

(Signed,) Stated Clerk."

[*From the Old School Presbyterian, Jan.* 31, 1873.]

ANOTHER IPSO FACTO.

We have seen Dr. Laws' reply to the editorial abuse of him in the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*. It is long, but it does not render evil for evil, railing for railing. Its defense of its author is couched in earnest and strong language, but, at the same time, it is remarkably courteous towards his assailant. Indeed, it is "given to hospitality"—for it concludes, not only with a disavowal of ill-will, but with an invitation to the editor to occupy the "prophet's chamber," and share the "hospitable entertainment" of Dr. Laws' home. It is unpardonable that the editor, after having made the unprovoked, wanton personal attack, should refuse to print the reply—particularly, as he was at liberty to insert a part of it, if he should find the whole too long.

But, we set out to inform our readers that Dr. Laws' *Letter* to the Synod of Missouri is about to be looked into officially. A committee has been appointed by the *Presbytery of New York*, of which Dr. Laws is a member, "to inquire in regard to a certain pamphlet" from his pen, "reported as reflecting on the Presbyterian church, to report and recommend what, if any, action be required in the matter."

We are both sorry and glad to know this—sorry, that the spirit of Gurley, Monford, Thomas, McLean and Stanton—the spirit of the "brutal" Assembly of 1866—is rampant still—sorry, that any *Presbyterian* body includes even one man so un-protestant, so tinctured with ecclesiastical tyranny as to set on foot this inquisition. And yet we are glad: for, it may be that, thus, providentially, the subject matter of the *Letter* will secure the consideration it deserves, and the result of such consideration may be the bringing about a better state of things in the Presbyterian family.

Can it be that there is enough miserable fanaticism in the *Presbytery of New York* to enact another *ipso facto*—to turn Dr. Laws out and put his *Letter* on the *Index Expurgatorius?* If so, he and the *Letter* will be in good company—but the breach in the Presbyterian household will be widened.

[The action of the Presbytery upon the Report of the above Committee.]

NEW YORK, FEB. 3, 1873.

The Presbytery of New York met in its usual place of meeting, viz., the lecture room of Dr. Booth's church, corner of 10th St. and University Place. The *report* of the foregoing "Committee to inquire in regard to a certain Pamphlet from the pen of Rev. S. S. Laws, a member of this Presbytery," was the first order of the day.

The report was made by Dr. Hatfield as chairman, and signed by three names of the Committee of five. It was *accepted*. Its *adoption* was moved by Dr. Booth and seconded by Rev. Mr. Murphy. A copy of this report cannot be given here, for reasons that will appear in the sequel; but the character of it can be gathered from the course of the discussion. When the motion for adoption was fully before the Presbytery—

Dr. Alexander arose and remarked that perhaps he stood alone in this matter, but he could not approve of this report, which was simply a piece of personal invective. He presumed that very few of the Presbytery had read the letter, so that they were acting in the dark. If there were any charges tabled let Dr. Laws be tried on them. He regretted the discussion of these old issues, but did not think that the Presbytery had anything to do with the Pamphlet.

Rev. W. W. Page felt an interest in the Southern Church and in the Northern Church: he also felt an interest in the Church of Christ, and hoped that the Presbytery would not pursue a course in this matter that would do harm.

Dr. Adams could not approve of the language in which the report was expressed. He agreed substantially with Dr. Alexander; saw no good that could come from a discussion of the subject, or action thereon by the Presbytery, and moved to lay the report on the table.

Dr. Hastings seconded the motion of Dr. Adams to lay the report on the table.

Dr. Hatfield urged that the Committee had a right to be heard in defence of the report, which they had submitted, and objected to its being so summarily disposed of. The motion to lay on the table was then withdrawn.

Dr. Hastings had read the documents in question and the only thing that he would particularly criticise was that, as it seemed to him, Dr. Laws had rather misused his position as a member of this Presbytery to give his Letter influence.

Dr. Booth (who had moved the appointment of the Committee of January 6th 1873, who had also moved the adoption of the report of that Committee) had not read the pamphlet but had heard complaint of

it and the desire expressed that it should be looked into by the Presbytery. He had moved in the thing only because others who thought something ought to be done hesitated to do it: but he had refused to serve on the Committee. All he knew of the matter arose from a subsequent reading of *The Presbyterian* and the present report of the Committee. But the thing of importance before the Presbytery is this, shall there come a defiance of the Assembly and a resistance of its friendly overture to the Synod of Missouri from a member of this body? Such a thing he considered a grievance and a wrong. The honor of the Presbytery was at stake and that honor was to be prized above all other things.

Dr. Hatfield was chairman of the Committee, but not a member of the Committee had sought this investigation. They had been appointed by a unanimous vote of Presbytery and had only undertaken to do their duty.

Since their appointment he had re-read the Letter and other members of the Committee had read it. They had put themselves in communication with brethren in various parts of the country—gentlemen whose names have great weight; and had taken their advice in regard to what was best to be done. It was after all this care in seeking and receiving counsel, that it was concluded not to institute process of trial, but that it was due to the Presbytery and to the Church to make protest against the language of this particular document, as is done in the report.

The facts are these, &c. The Assembly at Detroit last spring, made a friendly overture to the Synod of Missouri, in which he (Dr. H.) felt a special interest as he had been an early member of that Synod.

The whole document is nothing more than an indictment of the General Assembly to which the writer belongs, reviving and detailing the actions of the separate bodies and charging them on the United Assembly. It is a labored effort to prevent that Old School Synod from entertaining any propositions of union with our General Assembly. He brings the charge of secularisation against the church, whilst he himself has been engaged in secular pursuits in this city for years. He had sought to array these facts of past years in such a way as to defeat the admirable designs of our Assembly. The Committee, on reading the Letter, had felt exceedingly indignant, and advised as they had been, by leading men in the church, and especially by one whose name, were it mentioned, would have special influence with the Presbytery, under the circumstances, the Committee felt that they could do no less than what they have done.

Dr. Laws asked Dr. Hatfield to favor him with the name of the advisor to whom such special reference is made.

Dr. Hatfield declined to give it, on the ground that the correspondence was private.

Dr. Laws. But this is no secret conclave or star-chamber.

Dr. Hatfield. True, and I should be most happy to give the name, if at liberty to do so.

[The moderator here announced that the hour had arrived for the next orders of the day, viz.: The hearing of Dr. Jacobus, on Ministerial Sustentation and of Dr. Speer, on Education.]

On resuming the consideration of the Letter to the Synod of Missouri, Dr. Hatfield proposed that if the report were recommitted to the Committee, a certain clause in it would be stricken out.

Dr. Conkling stated that, although on the Committee, he had not seen the report till since he came in after the reading and discussion of it, and that he could not subscribe to it.

Dr. Hall moved the recommittal of the report to the Committee, expressing confidence that they were disposed to do what was right and proper in the case.

Dr. Laws asked that he might be allowed to take a copy of the paper before it passed out of the hands of the Presbytery.

Chancellor Crosby objected, and insisted that, as the paper had not been adopted by the Presbytery, he had no right to it, and could look to the Committee for it.

Dr. Laws explained that he did not wish to impede the movement of Dr. Hall's resolution for recommittal; and that he did not demand it as a right, but only asked permission to copy the paper, (the report of the Committee) as a part of the history of the case. This request was not entertained.

Dr. Paxton stated that it seemed to him that the proper thing for the Presbytery to do, was to call on Dr. Laws for an explanation, and then to take action in view of it. The state of the case is this: The General Assembly makes a friendly overture, &c.,—and a member of this Presbytery has written a document which sets at defiance the action of the Assembly and undertakes to defeat this friendly overture to the Synod of Missouri.

Dr. Laws. May I be allowed to ask Dr. Paxton, if he has read the Pamphlet?

Dr. Paxton. No, I have not.

Dr. Laws. That will explain his having such views, for I felt sure he never could have formed them from reading the Pamphlet itself.

Dr. Paxton. Is that not its purport?

Dr. Laws. I prefer not to reply to any specific inquiry as I expect to make a general answer.

Dr. Hatfield replied that its purpose was as stated.

Dr. Laws. I deny it.

Dr. Paxton then proceeded to unfold what he supposed to be the import of the Pamphlet and the posture of parties, and urged the idea that Presbytery should call on its author for explanation and then take action in view of that explanation.

The Moderator rose to put the motion of Dr. Hall for the recommittal of the report to the Committee, when Dr. Laws addressed the Moderator and was recognized; and on taking the floor, he remarked that what he had to say should properly be said before that report passed from the hands of the Presbytery, as it had been discussed in its present form at his expense; and therefore, he would make at this point, what remarks he had to make on this occasion.

1. The first point made was that all who had taken up their impressions from *The Philadelphia Presbyterian* either in regard to myself or my Letter to the Synod of Missouri had been misled. That paper, in its issue of Dec. 21, 1872, had devoted an entire column to me personally without the slightest provocation except my having written this Pamphlet. I promptly wrote an answer to that editorial attack, but my answer was wholly refused publication and another column was devoted to me in the same strain and the misrepresentations were repeated in the face of my correction, and others were added. I then sent a brief "Correction;" a garbled portion of which was inserted without any permission being asked or accorded to print a part and not the whole of the communication. This was accompanied by a quarter of a column more of characteristic comment. I then sent a "Statement" which should have appeared before this if at all, but it has thus far been withheld, so that whilst this paper has devoted between two and three columns in the course of several issues to what I have not hesitated to term misrepresentations of myself and my Letter, I have been denied a hearing, only about fifteen lines of my own composition having been allowed insertion.*

The remark was interposed that the *Presbyterian* had not been specially responsible, as another paper at Pittsburg had been spoken of as expressing similar views.

I responded that I was aware of what had been said by the *Pittsburg Banner* and also by *The Interior*, of Chicago, but that *The Presbyterian* had been named on this occasion and also referred to on the occasion of appointing the committee whose report is under consideration, in such a way as to show that *it* was the special oracle that had inspired this movement by the editorial attacks to which reference has been made.

2. With reference to the report of the committee, I shall begin with it where it ends, as it concludes by stigmatizing in no measured terms, what I have done as an act of censurable "*impropriety*" and of signal "*disloyalty*" to the Presbyterian Church.

As to the propriety of my writing this Letter and addressing it to the Synod of Missouri, (O. S.,) let some circumstances be considered that may not be generally known by the members of this Presbytery. I was

* The "Statement" was published in the issue after this meeting of Presbytery, i. e., Feb. 8th, with the change noted above. (p. 130.)

formerly a member of that Synod; for about eight years I held official relations to it whilst connected with the Synodical College of that state, one year as Professor and some seven years as President of it. My successor in that position is Dr. N. L. Rice, formerly a member of this body and now the President of Westminster College, Missouri. Some of the ministers and elders in that Synod and myself were boys together, with some of them I was a fellow student and quite a number of them have been my own pupils. There are more than a score of ministers in the church that I have been somewhat instrumental in preparing for their work (and this is amongst the pleasing reminiscences of my life,) and a number of them are active members of the Synod of Missouri. Yes, Mr. Moderator, I am "well known" in "that quarter," too well known to need any special endorsement or introduction from this quarter; just as well known, I may with propriety say, as any gentleman in this body is known in the city of New York.

When I was visiting there last fall, gentlemen of my acquaintance learning my views in private conversation and believing that they would be of great service to the Synod which has been so beset with trouble for the past six or seven years, I yielded to a friendly urgency in writing this Letter; and it was at the instance of others that I gave it my name, as I was assured that many in the Synod would be pleased to have something known to be from my pen on the subject of which it treats. But the fact is, if it were only for my own sake, I do not regret, but am very glad that I yielded to the claim made upon me and wrote this much-praised and much-abused Letter, as it has collected together in a perma nent and accessible form a mass of interesting documents and facts which make it valuable, as I am disposed to think, even to those who may not agree with the views expressed in it. Although I have not obtruded them upon others, nevertheless the views therein expressed have been floating in my head during these unhappy controversies of the church, and I am well satisfied at having given outward expression and shape to them.

Now, under all ordinary circumstances, when a man addresses his old associates and friends, and in doing so, does what he has a perfect right to do, some deference should be accorded to his own opinion with respect to the propriety of his conduct; he is entitled to some consideration, in such a case, as he must be expected to understand some of its aspects better than do others. I still think that what I did was eminently fit and proper, and it is a misconception to suppose, as has been suggested, that I availed myself of my connection with this Presbytery to give my views any weight that would not otherwise attach to them. On the contrary, my connection with this Presbytery is only incidentally alluded to once or twice, and that, too, in a manner indicative of the fact that my views are not the prevailing views of this body, and to show

that there was no just ground for prejudice against what I should say growing out of my connection with this Presbytery.

3. As to the imputation of "*disloyalty*" which is placed as a sting in the end of this report, and has been similarly applied by a certain newspaper,—I will say that if that word means anything, it must mean our obedience to the laws of any body of which we are members, and to whose rightful enactments we are under obligations to submit. All my life I have been a law-abiding man, both in the church and the state, and I defy anybody to establish against me the charge thus odiously made. But, Mr. Moderator, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that *my* loyalty, in both church and state is *contingent* and not absolute,—contingent upon their acting within their legitimate spheres of authority; contingent upon their adherence to the truth and the right. My loyalty to that which is *true* and *right* is above the claims of the enactments of any organizations; and my loyalty to Christ is the criterion of my submission to the acts of any of his erring councils on earth. I verily believe that our General Assembly has, in the particulars criticised in my Pamphlet, greatly erred, and that it is its imperative duty to acknowledge and forsake these errors which are grievous stumbling blocks in the way of others, as well as mill-stones about its own neck.

4. This leads me to reply to the charge of secularity. It is urged that it ill became me to accuse the church of erring in regard to secular matters when I, myself, had been engaged, for years, in secular pursuits in this city. I must confess that I do not appreciate the force (if it has any) of this *ad hominem* retort, so strenuously urged here and elsewhere. Suppose it true, as it is not, that I had forsaken the ministry and gone astray, willfully and of my own preference, in the paths of secular occupation. Could that be pleaded as justly altering the force of any *truthful* plea that might be found in my Pamphlet against improper secular deliverances on the part of the Assembly? My being wrong in any given course of action would not justify others therein, nor destroy my right to warn nor the propriety and *duty* of my warning them against being led astray into that path which I thus knew to be strewn with thorns and pitfalls. But, Sir, I never surrendered nor forfeited my right as a member and a minister of the Presbyterian church, which entitles me to be heard with the same respect as others, even my accusers, to the extent that, in the good providence of God, I may be able to give timely utterance to important truths.

In view of what has been said of my connection with business matters in this city, it is proper that, under the circumstances, I should explain somewhat in this presence and on this occasion. I shall do so in a few words. The occasion of my coming to New York city, as a place of sojourn, was briefly this. At my home, Fulton, Missouri, in March, 1862, I was required by the military to take an oath, which I could not take

for *two* sufficient reasons: 1. It required me to swear to a *particular theory* of the government, which was in utter violation of my convictions of the truth of history. I had, for years, lectured to my classes on the Constitution of the United States, having gathered into my library, one of the best collections of authorities on this subject to be found in any private library in the country, and made a special study of the text books and history of that instrument. It had just as well been demanded of me to forswear the facts in the history of the life of Christ, as to forswear the sacred facts in the history of my country and of its Constitution. 2. The other impracticable thing demanded of me by the oath, was that I should take an active part in the prosecution of the war. I was a minister of Christ, and a non-combatant by law, and besides, I wholly disapproved of the war, not believing it the right mode for us, as a Christian people, to settle our difficulties. In addition to this a bond was required of me as security that I would keep this oath; and that bond was double what was required of the leading politicians of that district, the two state senators. Under ordinary circumstances it would be deemed an insult and outrage to require a man to give a bond to keep his oath, but such was the manner of those times, these bonds not unfrequently being mere pretexts, under the cover of which to accomplish robbery. Well, Mr. Moderator, I could not do what was thus required of me. I would have died sooner than do it; I did go to prison for months in preference to doing it.

But during those months of imprisonment I had the great pleasure of preaching to hundreds of my fellow prisoners, of reading God's Word to them and of holding prayers with them daily. In fact, except Rev. Father Ryan, of the Catholic Church, I was the only man who broke unto those poor perishing men, the Bread of Life, in any form, during the months of my incarceration.—Some one asking where this was, I replied St. Louis, and in the Gratiot Street Prison, which had been known as McDowell's Medical College. I was refused permission to preach to any prisoners, except those in the part where I was confined, to whom I preached without asking any permission to do so, whilst Father Ryan had the entrée of all parts of the prison. He was a most excellent and agreeable gentleman and I was pleased with his acquaintance.

There never were any charges preferred against me. This is the indisputable fact, as shown by the documents in my possession. After an imprisonment of several months, a parole was tendered to me, which required me to remain in the loyal states, and not to *talk* nor to *write* on the subject of the war. That parole I refused to take, for the simple reason that no man could have honestly kept it, without stultifying himself, as there was nothing else to talk about in ordinary conversation. However, after a few weeks more, the parole was modified in this respect,*

* I believe myself indebted to Prof. G. C. Swallow, A. M., M. D., for this favor.

although it still required me not to write; but it extended my prison bounds beyond the loyal states, to Canada or Europe. I gave that parole and kept it, and was only relieved from it by President Johnson's peace proclamation long after the close of the war.

I first went to Europe, and expected my family to follow me, with the view of remaining there till the close of the war, if not longer; but a death in my family broke up my plans, and I came back in less than a year. I went West, and waited for peace a good part of another year, but the war still continued, and no man was able to foresee its end. I had some kinsmen in business in this city, and was urged to come here. I did so, and the office of one of them, who was a commission merchant, naturally became my head-quarters. As I was unoccupied he would sometimes ask me, as a personal favor, to attend to some matter of business for him,—to execute, it might be, some order in the markets of the Exchanges.

Mr. Moderator, I felt *the dignity of the cloth* quite as much as any man on this floor, and experienced a shrinking from this thing. But thus it was that I was first drawn within the sphere of secular employment in this city. Amongst that of others, I formed the acquaintance of the gentleman who was elected President of the New York Gold Exchange, at its organisation in the fall of 1864. He was the son of a minister, I believe a member of a Congregational church, and a Christian gentleman. It was he who brought my name before that Exchange, for the vice-presidency of it, or "*moderatorship*," as it was called, which may sound like rather an ecclesiastical title for a secular organisation of that kind. Having resigned the Presidency of Westminister College, Fulton, Missouri, the fall after the war broke out (1861), I had now been unoccupied, and on expense for several years, and available funds began to run low. The position so unexpectedly offered to me was not attractive, but it was unanimously tendered to me by a body of honorable and responsible gentlemen in the pursuit of a lawful, a necessary and honorable department of the banking business; and although I was not a member of the body, they gave me a complimentary ticket of membership, and fixed the compensation for the service asked, at a liberal figure.

I accepted this place, but occupied it less than a year: I resigned it in a little over eleven months, and had the pleasure of receiving from the body a handsome testimonial to the fidelity and success with which I had discharged the responsible duties of my position. That resignation of my position as presiding officer of this exchange occured seven years ago last fall.

But having now become familiar with the dealings in the business circles of the exchanges and seeing the great inconveniences arising from a lack of prompt and reliable information in private offices, respecting the fluctuations of the public markets, I formed the opinion that electri-

city could be made available to meet this great want, and to relieve business men of this annoying and expensive inconvenience.

In a word, I AM THE INVENTOR, the *originator and introducer* at my own risk, of THE SYSTEM OF SIMULTANEOUS REPORTING BY TELEGRAPH IN BUSINESS OFFICES, now so well known in this city and elsewhere. This application of electricity is *historical* and the most remarkable since Morse made it available for general, social and commercial uses, and it has produced the greatest change and sensation in business circles, since that, excepting only the Atlantic Cable. This undertaking occupied me for several years; but when I had carried it to the point, where it became an accepted success and a matter of business routine, I withdrew from it and left it to others. The Western Union Telegraph Co., is now the controlling party in interest. Had I fancied secular pursuits, I had my hands full of business of the most profitable kind. In order to resume labors more congenial to my tastes and habits as a minister, I turned my back on a successful business and sacrificed more in doing so, than would buy out these newspapers that have been so industriously misrepresenting me, and heaping their foolish reproaches on my head. It was my connection with this system of *telegraphic reporting* that made my membership in the exchanges a matter of importance to me, as I never was properly a dealer or speculator as those terms are understood. My withdrawal from any active participation in business, was well nigh four years since.—This is the manner and this the extent to which I have been occupied in business circles in this city. I seek no better vindication than a bare statement of the facts in the case.

5. I turn now to the charge that is urged at the beginning of the report of this Committee that I have "*sought*" throughout my *Letter* to "*thwart* the friendly overtures of the General Assembly to the Synod of Missouri,"—*sought to thwart*, these are the terms used. This is in the line of a certain newspaper representation, but it cannot be substantiated. The very contrary is the truth. The Letter in question so far from opposing or *seeking to* "*thwart*" this overture of the Assembly, undertakes to show plainly the true and only way in which the union therein contemplated can be accomplished. Numerous citations might be made from the *Letter* itself in proof of this assertion, but your attention will only be asked to some evidence that this is precisely the understanding that those have of it, to whom it was addressed. The Old School Presbyterian of St. Louis, which may be regarded the organ of the Synod of Missouri to which this Letter was addressed, whose able editor, the Rev. Dr. Farris, was a classmate of mine in Princeton Seminary, and who is one of the committee of three, if not its chairman, appointed by the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) at the request of Dr. Dickson to "confer with the Committee appointed by the Assembly," with which this Presbytery is connected, in regard to this same overture of union, uses the following

language bearing on the point now under consideration. This paper, in its issue of Nov. 22, 1872, says, in reply to a representation in *The Interior*, of Chicago, similar to that in this report:

"We just as positively DENY, as (*The Interior*) asserts, that Dr. Laws 'fights the old D. and T. battle over again,' and that his 'object is to refresh the animosities of the past and render a reconciliation with the General Assembly impossible.' On the contrary, Dr. Laws is carefully courteous, and *clearly points out* THE ONLY WAY BY WHICH RECONCILIATION BETWEEN THIS SYNOD AND THE NORTHERN ASSEMBLY CAN BE EFFECTED. This he does by showing how and by whom the variance is perpetuated." (The italics and caps. are mine.)

The same paper contained the following editorial in the issue to which my Letter was published as a supplement. It bears directly on the point as to the understanding had of the Letter, and all who have that Letter have had the opportunity of seeing it for themselves as it is printed on the cover:

"OUR SUPPLEMENT.—Rev. Dr. Dickson, of the Committee from the Northern Assembly, asked our Synod to appoint a committee to state the causes which have led to our present position, and the obstacles to our union with the Assembly he represented.

"We do not know that we can better and more briefly describe our Supplement than by saying that it is, though not of purpose, a compliance with Dr. Dickson's request. It was designed, as its distinguished author asserts, to be laid before the Synod, at its recent meeting, had opportunity offered; and, therefore, it could not have been prepared specifically to give the information asked for by Dr. Dickson. Nevertheless, it is a statement of the causes which have led to our present position, and of the obstacles to our union with the Northern Assembly.

"And it is a clear, perfectly intelligible, masterly statement. Dr. Laws answers these two questions: '*How is it that the Synod of Missouri became isolated?*' and, '*Why cannot the Synod of Missouri connect itself with the General Assembly North?*' He answers them most courteously and most conclusively. We thank him, not only because he has calmly and plainly set forth our grievances, but also, and chiefly, because he has demonstrated, beyond cavil, that there is a vital, an irreconcilable difference between this Synod and the Northern Assembly as to *Presbyterianism and the nature and province of the Church.* We trust, therefore, that both our friends and our opponents will give Dr. Laws' 'Letter' a careful and impartial reading."

The same paper, Dec. 22d, 1872, thus notices a similar misrepresentation of my Letter on the part of *The Presbyterian*, of Philadelphia:

"But the Philadelphia *Presbyterian* is not restrained, rather is exasperated by the Doctor's mildness and courtesy, and takes no notice whatever of the argument. Calling on his imagination for the facts as to how the *Letter* originated, he describes it, of course, falsely, as 'simply a frantic effort to prevent the Synod of Missouri from joining the Northern church.' We say, that, of course, this is false. There was no reason why any sane man should attempt to prevent any such thing. There was no tendency in the Synod toward the Northern church. One man, indeed, ventured to breath a syllable for union in that direction, but he

was charitably looked upon as somewhat beside himself. And we think that, since then, he himself has come to a wiser mind."

Mr. Moderator, the brethern in that Synod, with whom our Assembly has to deal, understand themselves and the principles involved in their position perfectly. It is not possible to throw dust in their eyes, or to blind them to the issues that lie before them; and there is not the slightest prospect of accomplishing an ecclesiastical union with them, except upon agreement of principle. Expediency will not answer. It was the endeavor of my *Letter* to point out the principles that divide us, and thus lead to such an understanding of our differences as would in the end be serviceable, in the most effectual manner, in bringing about such a state of things that a union, as the overture of the Assembly expresses it, "on conditions mutually acceptable," should be practicable. If my *Letter* has not succeeded in bringing these principles to view, then it is a failure. But my friends, to say nothing of strangers, have assured me that in that respect it has successfully attained its purpose, and whatever discount might be made from their opinion on the score of partiality, they are deemed sufficiently critical and exacting by those from whom they differ—

Dr. Hastings, at this point, asked if it would be any interruption for him to ask a couple of questions which he would like to have answered? but he observed that he would not do so if it would be an interruption. On being assured that it would not interrupt me in the least, Dr. Hastings then inquired:

1. Whether I did not take the position in my Pamphlet that the Synod of Missouri should not or could not consistently unite with the Assembly? and

2. How I reconciled that position with the fact of being myself a member of this Presbytery which is one of the Presbyteries of that Assembly?

Dr. Hatfield then rose and stated that he also would like to ask—

3. Whether I did not favor the union of the Synod with another body than the Assembly, viz.: the Dutch Reformed Church?

Dr. Alexander deprecated these questions as they would only lead to a discussion of those old troubles from 1861 onwards.

I resumed by observing that I would frankly answer the inquiries made, as I had no concealments nor mental reservation in this matter, but desired to deal with the case in perfect candor and would take pleasure in responding to any inquiries; and that I should certainly not now go into those troublesome matters as I had said in my Pamphlet what I had to say on that subject. In reply to Dr. Hastings' *first* inquiry, attention was called to the 4th resolution on p. 75 of the Pamphlet itself and it was read and is as follows:—

"*Resolved*, 4, That the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) finds in the record of

the General Assembly, North, sufficient reason to withhold, for the present, any offer of union with that body, and also, good cause to decline any overtures of union from it, as, we regret to say, we do not see how an organic union with it could now be effected on 'conditions mutually acceptable.' The hope of ultimate union by virtue of that body returning to the true theory of its standards, is still cherished, and whilst we heartily reciprocate all Christian and brotherly courtesies, we pray that God will bless our conscientious and dutiful testimony against their errors to the hastening of their recovery."

How do gentlemen read? they certainly should not overlook the qualifying clauses and expressions, "FOR THE PRESENT" and "NOW" and "THE HOPE OF ULTIMATE UNION, * * IS STILL CHERISHED."

Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the position thus taken is reached as the conclusion of an argument based not simply on the deliverances of the Assemblies during the war, but especially on a review [Letter pp. 33-41] of the opinion of the Supreme Court of the U. S. delivered by Justice Miller in the Walnut street church case, which opinion is published in full in the appendix of the minutes of the last Assembly, was fully endorsed by that body as the accepted law on which the Presbyterian Church shall henceforth acquire and hold property and accordingly the Committee on the forthcoming digest was ordered to publish therein an abstract of it. * * *

I feel constrained to add the following testimonial from the pen of a venerable layman, fully 60 years of age, who has been a ruling elder in the Presbyterian Church as long as I have been a member of it, and who has often taken a prominent part in all the courts of the church from the Session to the General Assembly,—a man who has been all his life a lawyer by profession and who has with honor worn the judicial ermine and whose exalted personal worth and professional ability and integrity entitle his opinion to a consideration amongst Presbyterians second to that of no man in America. I here give only extracts but shall, in another connection, have use for this testimonial in full over the name of the distinguished author. He (Judge Wm. T. Wood, now of Lexington, Missouri,) says:

"I have again read your letter addressed to the Synod of Missouri, and with much care, and am more than ever heretofore impressed with its value, not only because of the truth and accuracy of its statements of the matters involved in the issues between the General Assembly (O. S.) and our Synod, but because also of the fact that the real, true and great principles involved, have been distinctly and plainly developed and stated, and discussed with so much of fairness and at the same time with a clearness and ability that will leave no honest, candid, and intelligent Presbyterian an excuse for ignorance as to the true causes of the attitude and state of our Synod.

"Your letter with a logic unanswerable has asserted and vindicated these principles, so that not a word is needed from any quarter for their support. The resolutions you recommended, at the close of your letter in the scheme you present, from 1 to 6 inclusive (pp. 74—75) embrace

substantially all the grounds and questions of difference between our Synod and the General Assembly.

"It gives me great pleasure, to say that I most cordially and fully approve your views and positions, as to the true law of the civil cases, you refer to as having been decided in Missouri and Kentucky and Pennsylvania, and by the Supreme Court of the United States. The law as decided by the Supreme Court of the U. S. is not sound law, and as laid down by Justice Miller, will not I think be again affirmed by that or any other able Court. That decision resulted from a want of proper knowledge in the Court of Church organization and Government. These cases however you have handled so well, so justly and ably, that I am more than content with what you have said, and will fearlessly invite the criticism of lawyers, feeling sure that your views and positions as to these cases, will have the approval and concurrence of the learned of the profession. * * *

"I will now only add, the expression of a wish that your *Letter* may be printed and published in some more durable form."

In answer to Dr. Hasting's 2d inquiry—

Dr. Hatfield interrupted and insisted that his inquiry should be next answered. I assured him that his inquiry would not be forgotten, but preferred to answer the questions in the order in which they were put, 1st, as to the position assigned the Synod of Missouri, next as to myself, and finally in regard to the Dutch Reformed Church.

In answer, therefore, to Dr. Hastings' 2d inquiry respecting my own consistency in the matter of Church relations, I will use another extract from my *Letter* to the Synod of Missouri, beginning at the top of p. 42:

"There are those of you who can testify that I was hopeful that the union of the two Assemblies, would result in wiser and more conservative counsels than had prevailed during the war. I had witnessed a great breaking away from the intensely vengeful and intolerant spirit that was so universal, and was, as ever, disposed to give men, and also organizations, the full benefit of their inconsistencies. Neither men nor Church courts are bound to be consistent with themselves. If so, every sinner would go to perdition; but men are bound to be consistent with the truth. I was too hopeful, that with the passions of the hour would also dissolve the errors of the hour, especially in Church matters, under the light of God's truth. But the new Assembly, thus far, has, I fear, shown itself fatally consistent with its components during the years immediately preceding the union. My connection with a Presbytery of that Assembly does not imply any individual approbation of the offensive acts. There are many individuals that have not bowed the knee to them. When I was received by the New York Presbytery, it was on motion and with knowledge that I was from a Presbytery of your Synod. An individual is not an ecclesiastical court, occupies no territory, and has no jurisdiction. For a Synod to join in organic relation with the same body, would be to avow accordance of view with it, instead of antagonism on the points of controversy which have given existence to your Synod. This would be to deliberately surrender the truth and then vainly hope to recover it. It would have been gratifying to me, in various ways, had the way been clear for you to unite with this Assembly. But the Detroit Assembly has placed matters beyond the hope of present recovery; and I pledge myself

to aid in the contest, already inaugurated, against this false and revolutionary ecclesiology. Whilst on its territory I can aid the present minority."

Following this, is a passage quoted from the pen of Dr. D. X. Junkin, containing language in disapprobation of the course of the Assembly quite as emphatic and strong as anything from my own pen, contained in my pamphlet.

And now, with reference to the Dutch Church, or as its legal style is, "The Reformed Church in America." The position taken in my Letter does favor, decidedly, the union of the Synod of Missouri with that body for the reason, that, when that Letter was written, no real obstacle in the way of consummating such a union was known by me to exist. The fact is, my position in that *Letter* is favorable to the *union on principle* of all the parts of our Presbyterian family into one glorious *Church*. Hence in the "Scheme" of action set forth in my Letter to the Synod of Missouri is found the following resolution:—

"*Resolved*, 3, That the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) is prepared and willing, *Deo volente*, to unite, *ex animo*, with any portion of the visible Church of Christ upon the basis above indicated." p. 75.

This union may not be accomplished in our day, may never come to pass, but it is an event hoped for, anticipated in the future by most. I have the satisfaction in any event, of feeling that I have made my contribution, however slight it may be, toward the attainment of a more united and harmonious state of things than at present marks the condition of our Presbyterian churches.

"To the extent that the followers of Christ agree in doctrine and Church order, and especially to the extent that those who receive the same standards agree as to the sense and application of those standards, so as to be able to dwell together in unity and peace, and to coöperate in the labors of the gospel, exempt from strife and confusion, there is great strength, comfort and encouragement in union, and also in wealth and numbers. But any organic ecclesiastical union, in the present state of *Ecclesiology*, except as it is based on harmonious views of the doctrines of grace, and of the nature, power and duties of the Church and Church courts, it is humbly submitted, tends to forfeit the consummation so devoutly desired of the ultimate unification of Christians as one visible Church, and must be rather a source of weakness and warring than of power and peace. The laboratory illustration of procuring and keeping the elements pure and unadulterated, in order to an ultimate perfect combination of such as are endued with proper affinities, is pertinent here." Letter, p. 26.

Mr. Moderator, a word more and I am done. If I had cherished a malignant desire that this Presbytery should disgrace itself, and put upon its minutes a record of that disgrace, nothing could have pleased me better than that it should adopt this report entire; and I would have said nothing, or at least, have pursued that course which would have favored the adoption of as much of its language as possible. I am free to confess,

in view of some circumstances of this case, that I have felt the temptation. But I did not think it consistent with a true sense of honor and fair dealing to sit in silence and see the Presbytery stumble into a conclusion which it would certainly not entertain if in possession of facts which it was in my power to give. This is the sole reason of my having occupied your attention with my statements on this occasion, as I feel entirely assured that the action that may be taken is a matter of more importance to the Presbytery than to myself.

Dr. Hall expressed himself as only the better satisfied now that his motion for the recommittal of the report should be adopted. He was very glad to hear the clear statements and explanations that had been made; and he presumed that the Committee would act in view of the information given, especially as all opposition to the overture of the Assembly for the Union of the Synod had been disclaimed.

Yes, said Dr. Paxton, he is in favor of union if the Assembly will eat its words. The explanation is worse than the offence charged.

Well, said Dr. Laws, if there is to be a union somebody has to "eat words." "The explanation" amounts to this, that the Pamphlet speaks for itself on the matter of Union.

Dr. Adams stated that he had prepared a paper at an early stage of the business which seemed to him to meet the case, and which he read as follows:

"The *Presbytery of New York*, highly approving of the fraternal overture of the last General Assemby relative to the [O. S.] Synod of Missouri, can not but deprecate the revival and discussion of any matters of unhappy memory preceding the reunion of the two branches of the Presbyterian church.

"But inasmuch as the pamphlet referred to, is the production of an individual, for which the Presbytery has no responsibility whatever, they deem it proper to take no further action in the premises."

Dr. Hatfield accepted this paper, and presented it for the Committee as a substitute, and a motion was made and seconded to adopt it accordingly.

Dr. Laws hoped there would be regularity in the proceedings, and inquired how the Presbytery could entertain, from the Committee another report as a substitute for its original report whilst a motion to recommit that report was pending? and, also, how the chairman alone, without consultation with other members of that Committee, could, as had just been done, adopt this paper and offer it as the report of the Committee?

Dr. Hall's motion to recommit was then adopted.

The members of the Committee on the floor, without rising from their seats, signified to Dr. Hatfield their approval of Dr. Adams' paper as a substitute for the report recommitted. It was immediately presented and unanimously adopted.

Dr. Laws then stepped across the floor to Dr. Hatfield and asked to be allowed to copy the original report. Dr. Hatfield peremptorily refused. Dr. Speer, who was sitting next to him, was asked to witness the refusal, but on giving no heed to the request, Dr. Laws stepped back to his seat and asked the Moderator's attention to the fact that he had made the request and been refused.

Dr. Hatfield stated that he did not think that the brother had a right to demand the paper, as it had not been adopted by the Presbytery and was a private paper.

Dr. Laws stated that he had not demanded it as a *right*, but asked it as a courtesy that he should be allowed to copy that paper as a part of the history of the case; and that he only called the Moderator's attention to it that the fact, that he had been denied a copy of that paper, might be put beyond dispute.

"Extract from the Minutes of the Presbytery of New York, dated Feb. 3d, 1873.

'The Committee to whom was referred the Pamphlet of Rev. Dr. Laws, in making their report, recommend to the Presbytery the adoption of the following minute:

The Presbytery of New York, highly approving of the fraternal overture of the last General Assembly to the Old School Synod of Missouri, cannot but deprecate the revival and discussion of any matters of unhappy memory preceding the Reunion of the two Branches of the Presbyterian Church. But inasmuch as the pamphlet referred to is the production of an individual, for which the Presbytery has no responsibility whatever, they deem it proper to take no further action in the premises.'

A True Copy from the Minutes of the Presbytery of New York.

[Signed.] S. D. ALEXANDER,

Stated Clerk."

For obvious reasons I did not vote on this paper either yea or nay, as it was my own case that was in issue; nor did I feel called on to engage in any discussion of it, nor to protest against it; but I shall now make some observations upon it *entirely* in the light of its being an action of the Presbytery:—

1. The ground assigned for appointing the committee, was that my pamphlet was "reported as reflecting on the Presbyterian church." This action of the Presbytery does not give so much as a crumb of comfort to the dear brethren who originated that "report," or thoughtlessly gave it currency. "For without are * * whosoever loveth and maketh a lie."

2. The equivocation as to the responsibility of the Presbytery is

doubtless an inadvertence of language, the purpose of the body being to disclaim responsibility, as a Presbytery, for the arraigned Pamphlet. But the point of importance in this connection is this; the author of the Pamphlet never pretended that the Presbytery had any responsibility for it whatever. It was not he, but they, and they only, who were opposing the Pamphlet, that sought to *use* the Presbytery for the censure of it and of its author. This was a virtual abandonment, by them, of the field of argument and a vain appeal to the arbitrament of authority—and a failure.

3. As to the friendly overture, the Presbytery does not more heartily *approve* of that than does that Letter to the Synod. Nor does The New York Presbytery indicate in its action that the union contemplated in this "fraternal overture," is capable of realisation otherwise than as pointed out. The General Assembly desires "*to be brought upon grounds of closer union with the* [Synod] * * *on conditions mutually acceptable.*" Says the prophet, Amos, 3: 3., "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" The Letter did not create the separation nor the ground of it, but earnestly and faithfully undertook to interpret the differences that exist in such a way as to bring about a mutual understanding, and if possible, an ultimate agreement.

4. But the Presbytery "cannot but deprecate the revival and discussion of any matters of unhappy memory preceding the reunion of the two branches of the Presbyterian church." However, it cannot be overlooked that the records of both The General Assemblies glory in the very events, here spoken of as "matters of unhappy memory."

General Assembly, (N. S.) 1865, says:

"Our record as a Church we commit to the calm judgment of posterity, in the full assurance that there is neither a line nor a word the Christian patriotism of the future will desire to erase."

General Assembly, (O. S.) 1866, says:

"After carefully reviewing the whole course of these years of strife and alienation, we find nothing to recall or modify in the deliverances that have been made."

Was ever greater self-complacency put on record and published to the world? There is *a long stride in the right direction* between these complacent minutes of the General Assemblies and the conception which The New York Presbytery has of these things, as "*matters of unhappy memory.*" Let the General Assembly now go one step farther in the same direction, and manfully do as others have done and as the world of sinners is continually exhorted to do, *confess and forsake these errors.* "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Prov. xxviii: 13. A public body cannot ignore its own record, nor can it reasonably ask or expect others to do so. But it can and ought to put itself unequivocally right upon

its record, and that, too, consistently with the truth. Whatever may have been the sentiments or purposes of generous and magnanimous individuals, yet, *as a matter of fact*,—

"These [matters of unhappy memory] remain uncancelled upon the records of both the courts now amalgamated into one. No disavowal of them has been made, as of words inconsiderately uttered in times of high excitement. No counter declaration has been filed, gathering up the sacred truth of God in a new proclamation of the spirituality and independence of that kingdom which is not of this world."

Moreover the responsibility for the "revival and discussion" of these matters, in the present case, rests on the General Assembly itself; and thus the case is put in the 2d paragraph of my Letter:

"I was also glad to meet there (at the Synod of Missouri) a member of the committee appointed in May last, by the General Assembly with which my Presbytery is connected, to visit you at this meeting. The object of that visit is "a closer union" of your Synod with that Assembly, "on conditions mutually acceptable." This unexpectedly opens up the whole question again of your status and relations, which can only be wisely determined by a reference to the past as well as to the present. And I need not say that you should act upon a candid, unselfish and unimpassioned judgment, formed in view of all the facts, present and past. There are not wanting a good many well-meaning and easy-going people who indolently sing themselves to sleep, repeating as a lullaby the proverb, *Let by-gones be by-gones*, or—

'Let the dead Past bury its dead!'—*Psalm of Life.*

This is all well and very right, so far as resentful feelings and unchristian tempers are concerned. 'But he is a great blockhead who learns nothing from the past.' And we should also be admonished by other verses from that Psalm of Life, &c."

I respectfully submit that what is to be deprecated most is *not* the "revival and discussion" of these matters, but the *matters themselves.* The Scriptural order is this: "The wisdom that is from above is *first* pure, *then* peaceable." "Is there no balm in Gilead? is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"

As this *deprecation* only contemplates what preceded the union, of course it leaves untouched one main discussion of the pamphlet, whether the church shall sanction the wild action of the last General Assembly, as that action has occurred years subsequent to the union. I say whether *The Church* shall sanction that action, for *The Presbyterian Church* is in many very important respects an entirely distinct thing from The General Assembly. To confound the two things is gross inadvertence. Hence to oppose or to overthrow an action of the Assembly is neither to oppose nor to overthrow The Presbyterian Church, but, on the contrary, such opposition may be a bounden duty and a service to that Church. Prelatical Presbyterianism is infinitely less *tolerable* than downright Prelatical Episcopacy or Papacy, because the *theory* of them is consistent with their *practice.* But the theory (profession) of Presbyterianism is *not* compati-

ble with prelatical practice, either by its councils, or by its individual bishops; and the deliverances of the General Assembly are not, as the U. S. Supreme Court evidently supposed, *Canons* by which that church is governed.

[*From the Old School Presbyterian, Feb.* 14, 1873.]

DR. LAWS AND THE PRESBYTERY OF NEW YORK.

The *Presbytery of New York* has just missed placing itself alongside of the Assembly of 1866. But for the common sense (we will not say, charity) of Drs. Adams, Alexander, Hastings, and others, it would have achieved an exceedingly bad pre-eminence and written itself down an —a hyena.

The Presbytery met on the 3d inst. The Committee to whom Dr. Laws' *Letter* had been referred, and who, as their chairman, Dr. Hatfield, said, had sought the advice of leading men in various parts of the church, thought that it was not best to institute a process of trial, (!) but that it was due to the Presbytery to protest against the language of the *Letter*, which sought to thwart the good intentions of the Assembly and contained a labored indictment of that body. And so, the report emptied we know not how many bottles of wrath upon poor Dr. Laws, after the manner of Monfort, Thomas McLean and the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*. But, fortunately for its authors, and for the honor of religion, and for the cause of peace, this report was absolutely suppressed—*strangled*. Characterized by Dr. Alexander as a piece of personal invective, Dr. Adams moved to lay it on the table. This motion was withdrawn, so as to give an opportunity to the framers of the report to defend it, which they essayed to do, one of its friends frankly stating that he had never read the *Letter*, but he was willing to condemn Dr. Laws on the "say-so" of the *Presbyterian!* On Dr. Hall's motion, the report was recommitted to the same gentlemen, who without leaving their seats, accepted a substitute, which Dr. Adams had prepared, and presented it as their amended report. It was unanimously adopted and is as follows:

"The *Presbytery of New York*, highly approving of the fraternal overture of the last General Assembly relative to the [O. S.] Synod of Missouri, can not but* deprecate the revival and discussion of any matters of unhappy memory preceding the reunion of the two branches of the Presbyterian church.

"But, inasmuch as the pamphlet referred to, is the production of an individual for which the Presbytery has no responsibility whatever, they deem it proper to take no further action in the premises."

This minute is unquestionably mild, and we have no doubt that the sober second thought of the Presbytery hailed it as a happy escape from a bad fix and great turmoil into which some hot-headed, implacable *radicals* had nearly plunged the church. But, while our metropolitan brethren are certainly courteous and have skilfully quieted what threatened to be a terrific storm, their action unjustly reflects upon Dr. Laws and is obscure as to their own responsibility. They forget, first, that Dr. Laws' *Letter* appeared sometime *after* the Synod had definitely acted on the question of ecclesiastical relations, and, therefore, could not

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* What precedes this mark is all that was retained of the original report: what follows is Dr. Adams' substitute.

have influenced that action, and, secondly, that while the argument of the *Letter* illustrates the wisdom of the Synod's decision to seek organic anion elsewhere rather than with the Northern Presbyterian church, it does not at all interfere with "the last General Assembly's fraternal overture" respecting more friendly relations, and co-operation with our Synod. And the wording of their minute leaves us in doubt whether they disclaim responsibility for Dr. Laws or for his *Letter*. Of course they are responsible for him as a Presbyter. Equally of course, they have no more concern with his pamphlet than they have with Dr. Hodge's annual review, in the *Repertory*, of the General Assembly. This is a free country, and the Presbyterian church is a free church.

Perhaps, a new edition of the *Letter* would enable Dr. Laws to furnish each of his brethren, who so narrowly escaped condemning him, with a copy. And many others would likely avail themselves of the opportunity to examine what the *Presbyterian*, of Philadelphia, denounces as a *defamation of the church*, but which the New York Presbytery deliberately refuses to censure.

CONCLUSION.

These pages are published that they may accompany the pamphlet or letter addressed to the Synod of Missouri (O. S.) about four months since. It is worthy of remark that none of the numerous facts embodied in that *résumé* have been questioned in any quarter. The readers of that document, therefore, can feel increased assurance that the views therein presented are reliable; for the facts are given with sufficient fulness to enable an intelligent reader to form his own opinion, as he goes along, quite independently of the accompanying comment. This puts before each reader the proper test and ordeal of the views submitted.

What these two pamphlets contain that has been written or spoken by myself was impromptu, that is, constrained by the immediate circumstances of each occasion, unsought and unanticipated and when other matters made urgent claims upon me. Such is the fact, and there is no affectation in asking that the reader will make some allowance in view of it. But the general views expressed have not been formed hastily, nor, it is believed, superficially; and upon their soundness and justness, let time and history decide.

But I cannot take my leave of this general subject, upon which I do not expect to be called to speak again, without giving utterance to some additional thoughts.

There is at this time, it would seem, a double embarrassment pressing upon our Presbyterian church with an urgency never surpassed.

To get the good out of any system that is in it, there must be a *strict adherence* to its true principle and theory, and a wise and consistent *adaptation* of it to varying necessities. The church is not a fossil but a living organisation. A great deal has been said of late about the number of ministers in the Presbyterian Church who are not pastors nor statedly

preaching to congregations, and there is a pronounced prejudice current and fostered against all such. It may be conceded that there is some foundation for all this, even after due allowance is made for a vast variety of work, not necessarily comprehended either in Pastoral Theology or Homiletics, which, in the present state of the Church almost inevitably devolves, to some extent at least, upon those who have the vows of the ministry upon them. "Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel." It is apprehended that very few Presbyterian ministers live of the gospel who do not preach it. It is believed that sustentation is not, to any considerable extent, burdened with taking care of these drones. "If any would not work, neither should he eat." But, back of mitigating circumstances, has it been sufficiently considered that the bare existence of such a large—and may I not add, respectable class of ecclesiastical inoperatives is an *effect* which calls for *explanation* as really as for lamentation or condemnation? It is usual in scientific inquiries, and it is doubtless so here, that the cause is not simple but complex. The antecedent determining circumstances, the concauses, are numerous and diverse. Among these may doubtless be instanced a *lack* of strict adherence to our Presbyterian system, and also a lack of present adaptation of that system to existing exigencies.

Explain it as we may our system, as facts and experience show, does not bring together existing supply and demand—the supply of ministers and the demand for them on the part of the church and the world. It is not true that the blame for this state of things rests wholly upon the unoccupied ministers, however great may be their share of the blame. Not a few of them, too, are in their desires and accomplishments for usefulness not one whit behind the chiefest of those who disparage them. The fact is, our *system* just here, is defective and needs a new chapter on economics providing for this thing something positive and not merely a back door of demission. It is not true that the Church don't want these men. She does want them, just them and multitudes more like them, or no better if her wants were properly interpreted by her appointments. Whether the Methodist general superintendency may not be suggestive of something within the sphere, and compatible with the theory of our ministerial parity, as providing a new and much needed adaptation of the changeless principles of our polity and remedying a palpable deficiency, it may be worth the while of those who have the ear and the confidence of the Church at large seriously to consider. It is believed that, truly understood and properly handled, the Presbyterian organism is as flexible as an ecclesiastical Darwinian could ask, if only those constitutive of its present life have the prevailing strength to take on fully the adaptations demanded by its surroundings—by its present "*environment.*"

But, on the other hand, it is obvious enough, that one of the necessary conditions of such adaptation is a faithful adherence to the fundamental laws of its organisation and existence. To ignore or to unwarrantably depart from the accepted constitution and organic law of the Church, is to invite and to induce deep-seated degeneration and disintegration. The practical failure of Presbyterianism and the success of Christianity are not incompatible nor contradictory propositions.

Every officer of the Presbyterian Church, every elder and minister in it, has, in the acceptance of his official position, avowed his acceptance and approval of the government and discipline set forth in the standards of that Church. That is a fixed point, a settled matter, as much so as the acceptance of the Confession of Faith as containing the system of doctrine taught in God's word. If there is, as there may be, occasion for any change in these standards, they themselves prescribe the mode of effecting it. Faithful adherence to the existing standards and constitution of the Church is, therefore, presumed to be the honest mind of the officers of the Church. If errors or departures, in any respect, occur, as they do and ever will, it is plainly a matter of conscience and simple minded honor to renounce them, come back to first principles, do first works over again, and still again if need be; and a failure to do so engenders moral weakness, both external and internal.

Therefore, as a means of replacing our Presbyterian Church upon that pedestal from which she has fallen and of extricating her from certain errors and entanglements which, as I have shown, compromise her historic and constitutional consistency and greatly weaken, if they do not tend to ultimately destroy, her distinctive influence for good; in the exercise of *a true loyalty* to Christ, her only sovereign, whose rule is purely spiritual; in the interests of desired peace and unity, of known truth and of conscientious duty; out of a becoming respect for the opinions of the Christian world (Matt. v: 14-16); and that those who in time past have been wronged may be righted, and those of the future warned by our errors,—let the representatives of the church in General Assembly convened,

1. Reconsider and recall the mistaken approbation of the decision of the U. S. Supreme Court in the Walnut Street Church case, for two reasons:—1, The civil courts have no right to abandon the exercise of the functions with which the law invests them in their jurisdiction over, and protection of, the property of the Church on the established principles of the law; and 2, for the farther reason that such a ruling, *pro tanto* transforms the ecclesiastical into civil courts of last resort. If the decision of the Church court is final, and its constitutionality and regularity cannot be inquired into by the civil court when property, rights and interests depend thereon, then it is farcical to seek redress in the civil courts. Minutes 1872, p. 52.

2. Countermand the order for inserting in the forthcoming Digest an abstract of that opinion. Minutes 1872, p. 53.

3. Proclaim it as the solemn judgment of the Assembly that, in spite of any lapses therefrom, it is the true doctrine of the standards of the Presbyterian Church that "civil affairs" which belong to the sphere of the individual conscience and private judgment, such as systems of labor, political dogmas, and conduct respecting the nature, form, administration or change of human government, are not to be handled nor concluded by the utterances of the Church courts thereon, whether in their moral or their political bearing, but are to be left where Christ left the payment of tribute (Matt. xxii: 15-22; Mark xii: 13-17; Luke xx: 20-26), viz.: within the sphere of the individual conscience before God and of individual liberty, not to be infringed nor restrained by any authority unless that authority can be distinctly shown from the word of God as received and set forth in the standards of the Church: and let all past actions incompatible therewith be deprecated and renounced. Con. F., xxxi, 4.

The very essence of Christian liberty consists in our freedom from the interposition or mediation of any *human authority*, in Church or State, between us and God.

4. "Assert the non-secular and non-political character of the church *as the Kingdom of Christ*, spiritual in its nature and mission, and entirely separated from and independent of the State:" disavow all approval of any acts or utterances implying or expressing any concession to the State, in its civil or military powers, of any influence over or rightful control of the affairs or interests of the church, except to protect its members in their rights as citizens, and its property on the established principles of the law.

5. Decline to take any part in "the Centennial Anniversary of the Independence of the United States," so as to avoid even the appearance of political affiliation with any earthly power or form of government. As religious liberty is equally compatible with any form of human government righteously administered, it is not proper for the councils of the church to assume any political affiliations or antagonisms. If the church endorse Republics on principle, then Monarchies may, on principle, oppose the church. Minutes 1872, p. 69.

6. Reassert, in language that will silence cavil and relieve from all doubt and misunderstanding, the fundamental principle that the constitution of the Presbyterian Church is to us the medium and the sole medium, as the simple and accepted exposition of God's word, through which the General Assembly and the other courts of the Church receive power from Christ, and according to which, without any grace or prerogative of infallibility or inspired discretion, that power is to be exercised.

The Courts or Assemblies of the Church, including the General Assembly, exist by the express law of the Church, and must be in subjection to the same, and are not competent at any time, or under any circumstances, to act without such authority or contrary thereto, or to attempt to supply any supposed deficiency therein, under any exigency except in the manner and way therein provided. (See Con. F., ch. I., 1 and 6, and chs. XXIII, XXV., XXX and XXXI; Form G., chs. I., ii., VIII—XII., XIII., 1, XIV., 1, &c.; The Discip., ch. I., 1, &c.; The Directory.)

7. Define, as there is eminent reason for so doing, that when it is laid down as a fundamental principle of Presbyterian Church government "*that a majority shall govern*," the necessary limitation is that it "shall govern" in subordination to the express constitution of the Church and only as it prescribes. Form Gov. XII.*

We accept our Presbyterian standards not as of human origin and authority, but as drawn out of the word of God, and as being to us, as a church, his own word in a practical and systematized form. Hence the intolerableness of any church court or Assembly assuming to exercise powers not recognized by the standards or from which it is restrained by them.

8. Recognise the constitutional right of any lower Court to interpose its authority to stay, within its bounds, the operation of any deliverance of the General Assembly when such deliverance is deemed of questionable constitutionality, until the ruling shall be sent down to the Presbyteries, as provided. Form Gov. ch. XII. 6. The Presbyterian Church, unlike the prelatical churches, is not governed by the decisions of its General Assembly or Chief Council as *Canons* of binding authority, but solely by the standards of the Church and as they prescribe. Properly and technically it has no statute law. See p. 9 (7.)

9. Let the United Assembly make an explicit disavowal of all acquiescence in or approbation of the wrongful and unwarrantable deliverance embodied in the, so-called, *ipso facto* resolutions of 1866, which was carried into effect only against the Synods of Kentucky and Missouri, and which condemned unrighteously and unheard between one and two hundred of the ministers and elders of the Church who had signed or voted for the Declaration and Testimony; and let all the reparation possible be openly made for the injury inflicted upon two Synods and the good name of many individuals. If there be, although there should not be, a doubt whether the United Assembly is competent to take *such* retrospective action, then let the injured brethren have the benefit of the doubt.

10. In like manner recall in terms the censorious and condemnatory charges of schism, heresy and blasphemy, and other opprobrious epithets uttered against the Southern Church. Let that be done explicitly

which it is contended was done by implication in the act of 1870, to wit:

WHEREAS, This General Assembly believes that the interest of the kingdom of our Lord throughout our entire country would be greatly promoted by healing all unnecessary divisions; and,

WHEREAS, This General Assembly desires the speedy establishment of cordial fraternal relations with the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church of the United States, commonly known as the Southern Presbyterian church, upon terms of mutual confidence, respect, Christian honor and love; &c.

The United Assembly cannot, in so grave a case, stand on the point of doing explicitly and *directly* what is conceded as having been here done and intended by implication. Even the appearance of indirection should not be allowed to mar such a proceeding, for the reproachful imputations and dishonoring judicial accusations which should be utterly renounced, are wholly incompatible with the "mutual confidence, respect, Christian honor and love," upon which the Assembly avowed its desire to establish cordial fraternal relations, and cannot possibly be drawn within the categories of "rules or precedents."

11. Let the Church South be recognized, in the territory occupied by it, as doing the Master's work after the Presbyterian fashion; and consequently let its field of operations not be treated as missionary territory of this Assembly, and let the money and help expended on that field flow through the established channels of that Church. Consistency and fairness would suggest a similar course towards the Synod of Missouri (O. S.)

12. Appoint a committee with power (1) to restore all property and advantages from whomsoever acquired, and (2) to dismiss all law-suits pending in contravention of these utterances.

Notice a striking feature of the concurrent declaration, "That no rule or precedent which does not stand approved by both bodies, shall be of any authority, in the reunited body, EXCEPT in so far as such rule or precedent may affect the rights of property founded thereon."

Is it generally known that this Assembly's Synod holds church property and Lindenwood College in Missouri under this *Exception?* and that there is an important church case now pending before the Supreme Court of that State on the same *exception* as its sole foundation? The Walnut Street church case was likewise held before the U. S. Supreme Court by this very exception. And so in other less distinguished cases. By this *exception*, therefore, as it now stands expressed and interpreted, the United General Assembly is upholding with a vengeance and in the most oppressive form, the unconstitutional actions from 1861 onwards, and especially that of the Assembly O. S. 1866. Let the Assembly wash its hands of all the cases that have grown out of these actions, by taking

them out of this general and oppressive exception. Let the committee be appointed and make thorough work of it.

13. Let a general intermediary between unoccupied ministers, and vacant churches, and needy fields, be instituted as an organic working feature of our system, with the view of bringing together ministerial supply and demand in a manner not now done, in fact not capable of being done by the sporadic efforts of separate churches, Presbyteries or Synods, situated as is our church at present in its widely extended field.

14. Let such of these actions as the 3d, 4th, 6th, 7th, 8th and 13th which may involve a construction of the constitution or should have the force of a constitutional rule, be sent down to the Presbyteries for their approval.

In what has now been submitted, we have not only destructive criticism, but also constructive substitution; not merely a negative, but likewise a positive element; not simply the removal of incongruous parts that mar its beauty, but the suggestion of remedial and reconstructive measures that will give strength to this house of the Lord and make it a praise in the land.

When two business concerns unite, it would be construed as fraud for them thereby to attempt to ignore or evade the prior liabilities of the separate establishments. The two Assemblies united in the New Assembly their trusts, credits, assets and advantages, and devolved on it likewise their financial and ecclesiastical liabilities. Such is the situation and those who have righteous claims of any kind outstanding, should not for any reason or pretext be ignored, or left with any reasonable demand unsatisfied. The New Body can well afford to clear up all old scores, and ought to do so from a sense of duty and as extricating its new career from all unhappy complications with the past. Its only criterion of consistency is found in the standards of the Church, a strict adherence to which is our only guarantee of the attainment or maintenance of unity and peace as well as of the preservation of the faith in its purity.

The above summary presents the leading points of difference, deficiency and difficulty which stare us in the face, turn which way we will, and they must be recognised and surmounted as a prerequisite of regaining our unity, and attaining the efficiency of which our Presbyterian church is capable, but of which it now only dreams. I make no apology for offering it, as the truth is ever its own best witness and vindication. The case imperatively demands attention, and others may be stimulated to consider it more thoroughly and to analyze it more judiciously. Were an apology needed for this contribution it might be fully found in the assertion of my rights against the unmerited personal abuse heaped upon me for discussing the affairs of a church which in my

measure I have served during many of the best years of my life, as faithfully and successfully as any man in it, and also in the farther fact that no minister of this church has suffered more personally and officially than I have, in consequence of the very errors to which I have called attention. Neither flippancy nor indecent personal assaults can silence the just claims of considerations of such grave import.

"Indecent words admit of no defence,
For want of decency is want of sense."—POPE.

SAMUEL SPAHR LAWS.

New York, March 8th, 1873.

THE LAST WORD.

This pamphlet was completed, I supposed, before the following editorial paragraph attracted my attention in *The Presbyterian* of March 15th, 1873. It would hardly be just to Dr. Grier not to give him the benefit of his *last word* respecting what he calls "our controversy"—the *our*, in this case, it will be observed, being altogether one-sided. Controversy is usually *bilateral*, but in this case it has been eminently *unilateral*. I presume that the policy of this novel method of journalism is not so much to maintain the truth, as to impress the readers of this *organ* of the church with the preeminence of the editorial accomplishments displayed in its columns. Only read and doubt no more.

"CORRECTION.—The *Central Presbyterian*, in its last issue, referring to our controversy with the Rev. Dr. Laws, says: '*The Philadelphia Presbyterian*, while refusing to publish the reply of Dr. Laws to its assault upon him, proceeded at the same time, to make an extended comment on the suppressed article. Such an idea of fair play, we hope, does not widely prevail among the editorial fraternity.' We beg leave to say to the *Central Presbyterian*, that we purposely and carefully refrained from saying one word in regard to the contents of the communication which we declined to publish. Our comments related entirely to the pamphlet already published by Dr. Laws; and, to make this plain, we gave the number of the page in that pamphlet, from which we made our quotations. We did not allude to anything which was not before the public."

The Presbyterian, March 15, 1873.

Will the reader, for his own satisfaction, now turn back to pp. 110–112, and look at *The Presbyterian* editorial to which reference is here made?

To facilitate the reference some extracts from "January 18," and "March 15," will here be placed in parallel columns.

The Presbyterian,

March 15*th*, 1873, says,—

"We beg leave to say to the *Central Presbyterian* that we purposely and carefully *refrained from saying one word* in regard to *the contents of the communication* which we declined to publish."

The Presbyterian,

January 18*th*, 1873, says,—

"Dr. Laws uses language [that is, *in the suppressed communication*] in regard to the editor of this paper which must necessarily exclude him from the use of our columns. We shall not attempt to quote what Dr. Laws is pleased to say of us, and of our criticisms of his pamphlet. It is enough to say that he denounces us as actuated by wrath, malice and all uncharitableness, in our editorial comments upon the "Letter." We can hardly think that, after filling six columns with such bitter denunciations, he *could* expect us to be the vehicle of transmitting them to the world. There are some assailants on whom every man has the right to shut the doors of his office, or the columns of his journal. If Dr. Laws had chosen to send a reply as to our editorial somewhat in proportion to its length, and written in becoming language, we would undoubtedly have published it. But the long and abusive article which he has forwarded to us we most decidedly decline."

The question is not whether the language in the right hand column is true and proper. That is not now any matter of concern. The only point of present interest is simply this, does not that language as a matter of fact, relate to my suppressed reply.

It may be left to any person of the slightest intelligence and candor, to say whether *the words* of the right hand column have not "regard to the *contents* of the communication which we (Dr. Grier) declined to publish." And yet, when the *Central Presbyterian* holds the glass up for him to look at himself in this posture, Dr. Grier turns away from this image of moral obliquity and makes bad worse, by choosing the desperate alternative of deliberate,—I leave the reader *to supply* the epithet, with my compliments. One not acquainted with the peculiar controversial accomplishments of *this* "Editor," would scarcely be able to believe his own eyes in reading the above specimens of his "careful" writing. His cool editorial effrontery has even *deceived* the *Central Presbyterian* into a retraction of its just and pointed stricture in the following

language, which to one with all the facts before his mind, is seen to have the elements of a veritable *sarcasm*.

"*The Philadelphia Presbyterian* of last week corrects the remark in a recent number of this paper, viz., that while refusing to publish the reply of the Rev. Dr. Laws, it was made the subject of extended and unfriendly comment. This the *Presbyterian* says is a mistake, its criticisms having been founded upon the published pamphlet of Dr. Laws, not upon the reply referred to. We willingly correct the remark arising from a mistaken impression."—*Cent. Presb., March 19th*, 1873.

Again;

The Presbyterian,

March 15th, 1873, says,—

"Our comments related *entirely to the pamphlet, &c.;* and, to make this plain, we gave the number of the page in that pamphlet from which we made our quotations."

The Presbyterian,

Jan. 18th, 1873, says,—

"We said, further, that as Dr. Laws was himself deeply immersed in secular pursuits in the city of New York, it did not become him to set himself forth as the champion of a "spiritual" church, or as the utterer of a comprehensive condemnation of his own church because of its "secular" and "political" deliverances.

It is a small matter, comparatively, to say that when Dr. Laws wrote the pamphlet which is so complete an indictment against the church to which he belongs, and so thorough an acquittal of all the churches which have separated from it, he was a member of the New York Gold Room. Yet it adds very much to the singularity of this plea for the "spiritual," and this condemnation of the least taint of the "secular" in the acts of the church, that it should come from that quarter. Without at all condemning Dr. Laws for his daily employment, or affirming that his presence there was inconsistent with his calling as a minister of Christ, we are very clear in the conviction that the fact should have imposed silence upon him in the controversies of the church."

Could language be more completely in contradiction, again, than that of these two columns? The offensive personality of this language in the right hand column is only surpassed by the original editorial of Dec. 21, 1872. Here again, no forgetfulness, nor inadvertence can be pleaded in

palliation, as less than two months had elapsed and an editor always has his own file at hand.

Why, the most aggravated circumstance, in that article of Jan. 18th, was the repetition of false representations which had been plainly corrected in my *suppressed* Reply. Dr. Grier persisted in his misrepresentations of me in the face of the contradictory information which had been furnished him and which he refused to publish. He now says of this very editorial, thus persistent in the *repetition* of personalities, that it did not relate to me at all, but "entirely to the pamphlet." ?

When this editor says, "We did *not allude to anything* which was not before the public," does he forget that "*the long and abusive article*," as he was pleased to call my suppressed communication, was *not* before the public, nor Dr. Laws' personal affairs, otherwise than as they had been dragged there gratuitously in his own columns? I say gratuitously, for, in that very article, he says; "Our controversy with Dr. Laws is not a personal one."

The foot note of p. 121, will give the key to what Dr. Grier was attempting to do in quoting from the pamphlet and commenting thereon, and show that that also had a special "regard to the contents" of the suppressed reply.

The public will now be able to appreciate this critic at his true value. Criticisms from such a quarter cease to be formidable—I had almost said, respectable.

The talismanic "we" of the newspaper "Editor" does not entitle him to any special immunity from personal and public responsibility. "Messrs. Editors" is not an imaginary, impalpable, shadowy nonentity or myth, but a plain mortal man; and when the mask is lifted from the *Wegoism*, it is seen to have no more of the diviner's virtue in it than simple *Egoism*. What has been criticised from the columns of *The Presbyterian* was *editorial*. Therefore, whilst Dr. Grier may wince, he has no right to complain at being held responsible for it.

Dr. Grier took a wrong step at the very outset of this controversy. As an "Editor," his business might have been with the *Letter* but not with me. He should have had the moral courage to retrace that step, promptly, and the manliness to repair the wrong done. This would have saved me from a great deal of annoyance and trouble, and himself from the suicidal course which he has pursued,—a course, in what manner reconcileable with the principles of honor and truthfulness? An Editor who loosely writes regardless of the sacredness of facts, confronts you with unsustained assertions where you demand evidence, and abuses the confidence reposed in his position and his published word, prostitutes the press into a firebrand to curse and blight society. That a religious paper, such as *The Presbyterian*, should be thus used, adds the last degree of aggravation to the offence of the culprit. The religious

editorial fraternity should not, for the peace of the Church, retain the name of *such* an one upon their rolls. Most assuredly, henceforth, more than one will never read anything editorial or communicated, in the columns of this paper under its present editorial auspices, with the least degree of confidence. No man acquires suddenly—*per saltem*—such traits as have been exhibited. I feel no satisfaction, however, but an unfeigned mortification at having been so much as even the *occasion* of their disclosure. But there is a tribunal before which we must all appear, more august than that of man or of public opinion. *Every man's work shall be made manifest. But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; yea, I judge not mine own self.*

And now I once more lay down my pen. I have not sought and do not seek personal controversy, but I do not shrink from it when the necessity is laid upon me. The truth is sacred, and when the alternative is presented of defending myself in its interest, there is only one choice possible. Our religion gives as little countenance to pusillanimity as to arrogance. Its meekness is not craven; the humility it inculcates is not that of a Uriah Heep. *Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed we intreat.*

Μηδείς σου περιφρονείτω.—Paul.

S. S. L.

[From the *Central Presbyterian*, March 5th, 1873.]

"REV. DR. LAWS.—The article of Dr. Baird will serve to set the case of this brother in a just light."—*Editorial.*

"*For the Central Presbyterian.*

"REV. DR. LAWS, HIS LETTER, AND HIS ANSWERS.

"Mr. Editor,—Some time since I read a notice in your columns of the able and exhaustive discussion which the Rev. S. S. Laws, LL. D., had published of the action of the Northern General Assembly towards the Synod of Missouri, and other cognate matters. The chief reply to this letter which has been attempted was by the Philadelphia *Presbyterian*, and consisted mainly in an attack on Dr. Laws personally, charging him with being a secularized clergyman, whose daily business led him to Wall Street. Dr. Laws replied to this letter, and denied the Editor's allegations. The *Presbyterian* refused to publish this article, but it has, I believe, been issued in pamphlet form, though I have seen no copy of it. In declining to publish it, the Editor of the *Presbyterian* ignored Dr. Laws' denial, but reiterated his allegations. This drew from Dr. Laws a brief statement, denying that he was secularized or ever had voluntarily withdrawn from his proper ministerial work; and denying that his daily business led him to Wall Street.

To this the *Presbyterian* rejoined by quoting from the records of the Gold Room to show that Dr. Laws had been a member of it, (which Dr. Laws never denied,) and that he had sold out his ticket of membership subsequently to the time of writing his letter.

To this Dr. Laws replied by saying he was still a member of both the Stock Exchange and of the Gold Room,* but that nevertheless for more than six years he had ceased to be a regular visitor at either, and that for more than [for nearly] four years he had ceased to have any secular occupation whatever which would interfere with the full discharge of any ministerial work which the providence of God might open before him.

Dr. Laws, in his card in the *Presbyterian*, speaks of having been providentially driven from his work; but he fails to explain what that Providence of God was, and therein does himself great injustice. As I happen to know the facts, I deem it right to make them public.

In the winter of 1861–2, Dr. Laws was quietly engaged in his proper work, at Fulton, Mo., having at the meeting of Synod in October resigned the Presidency of Westminster College. While thus occupied, and no charge having been made against him as a wrong-doer of any kind, he was arrested by order of the United States Provost Marshal at Fulton, and required to take an oath which I am free to say no honest man who had the intelligence to understand the Constitution of the United States and the meaning of the oath, would take without perjury.

[* My ticket of membership had been sold, but I was not aware of it till afterwards. So that, at the time the Presbyterian made its first attack on me, Dec. 21st, 1872, I was not a member of either of the exchanges. But I wish it distinctly understood that I attach no importance to this circumstance, as I should not hesitate an instant to secure membership in each of these exchanges again, if I were in business that made it an object. The foolish impressions in this regard are founded on gross ignorance.—L.]

Not only was he required to take this oath, but this same officer demanded of him security in the sum of $5,000, that he would speak no word and perform no act inconsistent with that oath. Many of your readers know what all this was designed for—nothing else than to despoil him of his goods. Dr. Laws, as an honest man, declined to take the oath; and as a prudent man, too wise to be caught in a snare set before his eyes, declined to give the bond. Consequently, for the crime of refusing to place his property within the reach of the cormorants who in those days wore shoulder straps and brass buttons, he was cast into prison. While there, he was denied the right and the privilege of ministering spiritually to his fellow-prisoners of other wards, who were neglected by those false brethren who, if not implicated in his arrest, at all events connived at it. A distinguished lawyer, a relative of Dr. Laws, made an earnest, able, and (to honest men aiming to do their duty,) an irresistible appeal for his release, on the ground that he had committed no offence and that no offence was charged against him. I have had the opportunity of reading this letter and also the answer of the Provost Marshal to it. He distinctly states that Dr. Laws was not charged with any offence, but was imprisoned because he would not take the oath offered him and give the bond required. After several weeks, [months,] delay, he was banished to the "loyal" States, to which Europe was afterwards added. Here then is a history of the providences of God, by which Dr. Laws was driven from his ministerial work, and compelled to engage in some secular occupation. The ministers of the North were too "loyal" to countenance a man under banishment by "the best government on earth;" and hence, Dr. Laws was given over to uncovenanted mercies, and allowed to work out his own salvation as best he could.

Dr. Laws went to Europe, and remained there for some time; but the war still going on he found it necessary to return to the United States, and engage in such occupation as might present itself before him, since the door of the ministry was closed by military power. New York was the safest place for a man under his circumstances, and to New York he went. His talents and experience were soon called into requisition in the organizing of the Gold Room, and he was made its first Chairman. In this position he remained for less than a year, when about the time of the close of the war, he resigned his office, and ceased to be a daily visitor at the Gold Room, in order to perfect an invention which will undoubtedly place his name high among that noble list of men of science who have proved themselves benefactors of mankind.

Now, the *Presbyterian* availed itself, unkindly and unfairly, of the ignorant prejudice in the minds of the masses against the Gold Room, in order to damage Dr. Laws. The people abroad attribute all the stock gambling and gold gambling operations of which they read accounts in the newspapers, and of which they sometimes experience the ill effects, to the Gold Room, and they deem every body connected with those boards to be gamblers. But this is wholly unjust; the Gold Board is a place just like the stock exchange, the tobacco, the corn, the cotton exchanges, all over the country, and just like those other exchanges it is designed as a convenience to business men. The whole business is conducted just like any other exchange. A man has gold to sell; he goes there to sell it. Another has gold to buy, he goes there to buy it. Otherwise, these transactions would take place in brokers and banking officers.—The rings formed, by which the gambling operations in gold are controlled, are sometimes made by members of the Board, and sometimes by those not members of it. But assuredly those not

implicated in the transactions, are not to be held responsible for the evil conduct of others. The Gold Board cannot control the conduct of its members; but when it can convict them of evil conduct, it can and does expel them. The Gold Room has hundreds of members; the rings usually consist of a half dozen millionaires, who command so much money that they cannot be controlled by the rules of the Gold Board. To be a member of the Gold Board, is simply to be a banker; and the business done there, is just as honest and honorable and Christian, as that done in banking offices, and by Boards of Bank Directors, the world over.

The invention of Dr. Laws was that of the gold [and stock] telegraph. I do not understand it sufficiently well to explain it. * * * *

Dr. Laws was hurrying his machine forward to get it ready for use, when President Johnston issued his proclamation of amnesty, by which Dr. Laws was freed from his parole and his banishment. His purpose was to finish it, and at once dispose of it, so as to be ready to resume his ministerial work; this was delayed, however, by an effort made to rob him of his invention. He was compelled to devote nearly a year to the contesting of this matter, which was finally settled incontrovertibly in his favor. He then put his invention into a thorough working condition, and had over 250 of the machines in full operation in New York, and more than forty in Philadelphia, when he sold out, about four years ago, to a company with a half million capital. He sold it at great sacrifice in order to be prepared for any opening which Providence might present before him. Such unkind charges as those to which the *Presbyterian* has given currency, I happen to know, have had a good deal to do in preventing his obtaining a suitable field of labor. His Northern friends we would judge from reading the *Presbyterian*, have no use for a man of his principles; and are ready, on any pretext or none, to cast out his name as evil. I would consider it a most fortunate circumstance for our church, should a door of usefulness be found for him amongst us. I have heard some say, that because of his connection with the Gold Room, they had lost confidence in him. My reply to this kind of judgment is, that but few of those who thus summarily and pragmatically condemn a brother without knowing the facts, would be willing to make the sacrifices of a pecuniary kind which I know Dr. Laws has made in order to free himself from the necessity of secular occupation, and to become ready for any work which God's providence might open.*

This statement is written without the procurement or the knowledge of Dr. Laws. I have written it as a sheer act of justice. In doing so, I have refrained from any allusion to the heart trials, the discouragements, the struggles, the anxieties, which may have attended a history of wrong on the part of the government, and of cruelty on the part of those who ought to have been brethren, ready with words of Christian sympathy and encouragement, and of fraternal love. I may, however, utter a single word. Those who have passed through trials and difficulties themselves, ought to have attained the practical knowledge to enable them to exercise confidence in and charity for their brethren who in like manner are called to suffer; and should sympathize rather than abuse.

Very truly yours,

Richmond, Va., Feb. 27th, 1873. E. T. Baird."

* [At the time he sold out he had net profits of over thirty thousand dollars a year from his *Gold and Stock Reporting Telegraph* business, which was established and growing beyond his power to supply the demand.—L.]

OPINION OF THE PRESS.

The Old School Presbyterian, St. Louis, Mo., Nov. 8, 1872, of which this Letter was published as a Supplement, gives the following editorial notice of it:

"OUR SUPPLEMENT.—Rev. Dr. Dickson, of the Committee from the Northern Assembly, asked our Synod to appoint a committee to state the causes which have led to our present position, and the obstacles to our union with the Assembly he represented.

"We do not know that we can better and more briefly describe our Supplement than by saying that it is, though not of purpose, a compliance with Dr. Dickson's request. It was designed, as its distinguished author asserts, to be laid before the Synod, at its recent meeting, had opportunity offered; and, therefore, it could not have been prepared specifically to give the information asked for by Dr. Dickson. Nevertheless, it is a statement of the causes which have led to our present position, and of the obstacles to our union with the Northern Assembly.

"And it is a clear, perfectly intelligible, masterly statement. Dr. Laws answers these two questions: '*How is it that the Synod of Missouri became isolated?*' and, '*Why cannot the Synod of Missouri connect itself with the General Assembly North?*' He answers them most courteously and most conclusively. We thank him, not only because he has calmly and plainly set forth our grievances, but also, and chiefly, because he has demonstrated, beyond cavil, that there is a vital, an irreconcilable difference between this Synod and the Northern Assembly as to *Presbyterianism and the nature and province of the Church*. We trust, therefore, that both our friends and our opponents will give Dr. Laws' 'Letter' a careful and impartial reading."